

FARMERS FOR THE LORD

DAY THREE: THE THORNY GROUND

JUDAS - THE TRAITOR, BY TRANSGRESSION FELL

Matthew 26; John 13, 18

This lesson will study the example of Judas who heard and became a follower of Jesus, but betrayed the Lord because of his love of money. It will help us to see what the Lord meant when he talked about "thorny soil" and how it represented a divided heart.

Introduction:

1. The Parable of the Sower teaches us about the kinds of hearts that men may possess.
2. These types of hearts are illustrated by four different types of soil onto which seeds fell.
3. The success or failure of the planted seed was dependent upon the kind of soil in which it was planted.
4. By learning about these soils, we can learn the kind of heart (mind) that is needed to bear fruit for the Lord.
5. The first type of soil was the **wayside ground**.
6. The second type of soil was the **stony ground**.
7. The third type of soil is the **thorny ground**.

I. The Description of the Soil

(Matthew 13:7)

- A. "Behold, a sower went forth to sow."
 1. In the days before farm machinery, seeds were sown by hand.
 2. Sometimes, this would involve making a hole in the ground and planting one seed at a time.
 3. However, Jesus describes a man who is scattering seeds by the handful upon a field that has been prepared by being broken up.
 4. In this means of spreading seeds, many would land upon the prepared soil; but, some would fall outside of the field...
 - a. Some on the wayside soil
 - b. Some on stony ground
 - c. Some among the thorns
- B. Jesus spoke of seeds that fell upon the ground that was thorny.
 1. The thorny soil was not a part of the prepared field.
 2. In order to prepare a piece of land for cultivation, the thorns and other weeds must be removed.
 3. This requires hard work and much effort.
 4. The fewer thorns that are present, the easier the preparation will be.
- C. Because the thorns were not removed from this soil, they grew up with the seeds and choked them (cf. Mark 4:7; Luke 8:7).
 1. They took nutrients from the soil that could have nourished the seeds.
 2. They crowded out the new plants and robbed them of sunlight and water.
- D. As a result, the plants were undernourished and unable to produce fruit.

- II. The Explanation of the Heart (Matthew 13:22)
- A. "Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower."
 1. Jesus wanted those who heard to understand His teaching.
 2. Thus, He explained the meaning of the parable.
- B. This description of soil is meant to illustrate the heart of man.
- C. Just as soil can be filled with thorns, so man can allow his heart to be the same.
- D. This means that a man may have enough openness and honesty in his heart to hear and believe the Gospel.
 1. In fact, this person becomes a follower of Christ and even begins to grow.
 2. If the thorns were removed, they would grow into a faithful and productive Christian.
- E. However, this same person allows the Word of God to be choked out of their heart and life by other things.
 1. He is willing to accept the Gospel, but wants to hold on to other things as well.
 2. In Mark's account, Jesus stated it was "the lusts of other things entering in" that crowded out the Word.
 3. The word for 'lust' is defined as, "Longing, craving, desire; desire for that which is forbidden."
- F. Jesus details some of the "other things" that men desire which will choke out the Word of God.
 1. **The Care of This World** – Anxiety about things of this life
 2. **The Deceitfulness of Riches** – Wealth, money, abundance, possessions
 3. **Cares and Riches and Pleasures of This Life** – Physical, sensual delight
- G. Some allow worldly worries to cause them to abandon their faith.
 1. Jesus taught His followers not to have these worries because the Lord will provide (Matt. 6:19-34).
 2. Yet, there are some things that the Christian may have to do without.
 3. The Christian must be willing to sacrifice to do the will of God and to serve others.
 4. The Christian will face persecution that may cause difficult times.
 5. Yet, these things must not be allowed to crowd out the Word of God from one's heart.
 6. God promises to see His children through their tests and trials and to meet their needs. *{Remember how He cared for the children of Israel as they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years!}*
- H. Some allow their love of money to cause them to abandon their faith.
 1. Many will forsake the assembly to earn more money (cf. Heb. 10:25).
 2. Many will neglect their duties as Christians to make more money.
 3. Many will neglect the needs of their families in order to have more possessions.
 4. Many will ignore God's instructions concerning gambling in order to try and get more money.
 5. Many will break God's laws concerning stealing to gain more stuff.
 6. Yet, Jesus taught that riches are deceitful – they cannot give man what he truly needs (cf. Prov. 23:5; Ecc. 5:10-15; 1 Tim. 6:9-10).
 7. And, in the end, they all must be left behind and cannot be taken into eternity! (Cf. 1 Tim. 6:17-19)
- I. Some allow desires for sinful pleasures to cause them to abandon their faith.
 1. They refuse to remove sinful practices from their lives.
 2. Thus, they become double-minded and unstable (Matt. 6:24; Jam. 1:8).

- J. We must be careful not to let anything grow in our minds or in our lives that would crowd out the Word of God.
 - 1. We must repent of our sins – turn away from them and do not let them gain control of us (cf. Rom. 6:12-14).
 - 2. We must crucify the old man of sin (Rom. 6:5-6; Gal. 2:20; 5:24; Col. 3:5ff).

III. The Illustration of Judas

(Matthew 26:1-9, 14-16)

- A. Judas was a disciple of Jesus who became one of the 12 apostles (Matt. 10:1-4).
- B. However, at some point he began to lose his faith in Jesus and the Gospel (cf. John 6:64-71).
- C. Ultimately, he decided to betray Jesus to the Jewish leaders.
- D. One of the reasons he made this decision was because of his desire for money.
 - 1. In Matthew 26, Judas' decision comes after precious ointment was poured upon Jesus' head.
 - 2. Judas called it a "waste" and said that it should have been sold so the money could be given to the poor (cf. John 12:4-5).
 - 3. However, the Bible says that Judas really was not concerned about the poor.
 - 4. In fact, he was a thief and wanted the money for himself (John 12:6)!
 - 5. Thus, he was willing to sell out Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.
- E. Discouragement and greed led Judas into other sins.
 - 1. He became hypocritical in his religion (cf. John 13:1-30).
 - 2. He became the betrayer of the Son of God (John 18:1-5; Matt. 26:48-50).
 - 3. Ultimately, he committed suicide due to his guilt (Matt. 27:3-5; Acts 1:18).
- F. This is a perfect illustration of a child of God allowing the thorns in his heart to choke the Word of God.
- G. Judas was a disciple and apostle of the Lord.
- H. But, because of his love of money, he abandoned his Lord, his faith, and his hope.
- I. We must guard our hearts against sin of any kind.