



MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM

SERMON NOTES | VOLUME 3

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PART 15: BECOMING UNFRUITFUL

RECAP

After the Word of God is planted in hearts that are not hard or stony, the Word has the opportunity to grow and produce fruit. However, the cultivating of soil doesn't stop there. In order to reach the harvest of God-ideas that the Word can produce, we must be aware of weed seeds. Weed seeds are worldly ideas that are counter to the Word of God. Weed seeds will choke out the truth of God's Word. It is important to identify and get rid of weed seeds so they aren't a part of your life.

DIVE DEEPER

Take a moment and consider everything that the world is worried about. It is consistently based in tomorrow. God has a different way for us to live: He wants us to seek first God's kingdom today. When we seek God's kingdom first, we focus on what needs to happen today and trust God with the future. We become less concerned about what the world thinks and more concerned about the direction of God's Word in our lives.

Living life this way keeps the weed seeds from having a chokehold on the good seed of God's Word. You see, one of the ways the enemy can ruin a harvest after the Word has been planted is by providing ideas other than God's Word in our lives. These "weed seeds" are competing ideas about the world. They include the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things.

Cares and anxiety are based in fear—and fear is a distraction that will choke out faith in God's Word. When you seek first God's kingdom, your concern becomes sowing God's Word into other people's lives through your lifestyle, your words, and your money.

Remember, if you start experiencing the peace and joy that comes from following God's Word, and then it stops, it's very likely there's a weed seed in your life attempting to choke out your harvest. Don't let it! Refocus in on God and His Word. Let the truth of His promises come alive in your heart.

READ MORE

Mark 4:11 KJV

And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables:

Mark 4:13-20 KJV

And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables? The sower soweth the word. And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; and have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

Matthew 6:25 KJV

Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

Matthew 6:31-34 KJV

Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek;) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

1. Have you noticed weed seeds in your life?
2. What can you do to place a priority on God's Word over worldly ideas?
3. What are various sources of weed seeds in your life? What are sources of God's Word?
4. How can you help bring God's Word to other people today?

PART 16: CARES OF THIS WORLD

RECAP

Read through the parable of the sower and you'll see three different categories of worldly ideas that will choke out the Word of God: cares of this world, deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things. The first category we should understand is the cares of this world; they will choke your faith. That includes both the distractions of this world as well as fear-based anxiety and worry that will keep you focused on what is wrong rather than on God and His Word. We counteract these weed seeds by seeking first the kingdom of God and trusting God to take care of everything else.

DIVE DEEPER

Many people have become casual about worry. They worry about this; they are anxious about that. Worry is just a regular part of their day. However, worry doesn't have to be front and center in your life, for worry is based in fear and a root cause of stress.

God wants us to become more dependent on Him than our worry.

When we worry, it chokes out our faith. When we are distracted by the world, it chokes out our faith. Thankfully, God has a three-fold cord that cannot be broken that will help us overcome worry and fear. Those three things are the power of the Holy Spirit, the love of God, and a sound mind.

When fear overwhelms you, pray in tongues. Put others first. Prioritize thoughts that are based on the Word. These three choices will push fear far from you. They are, you could say, the antidote to fear.

Remember, the thoughts running through your head don't have to stay there. When negative thoughts or fear-based concerns come into your mind, you can run them out by choosing thoughts that are based on God's Word. How do you take those thoughts? You use your words. As you do these things, you cast your care upon the Lord. When you cast your cares on the Lord, you are choosing to humble yourself before the Lord and trust Him. This mindset is one that will keep weed seeds away from your heart.

READ MORE

Mark 4:18-19 KJV

And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

Mark 4:18-19 Amp.

And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word, but the worries and cares of the world [the distractions of this age with its worldly pleasures], and the deceitfulness [and the false security or glamour] of wealth [or fame], and the passionate desires for all the other things creep in and choke out the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

2 Timothy 1:7 KJV

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Matthew 6:31-34 Amp.

Therefore do not worry or be anxious (perpetually uneasy, distracted), saying, "What are we going to eat?" or "What are we going to drink?" or "What are we going to wear?" For the [pagan] Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; [but do not worry,] for your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But first and most importantly seek (aim at, strive after) His kingdom and His righteousness [His way of doing and being right—the attitude and character of God], and all these things will be given to you also. "So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

James 1:2-4 KJV

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

1 Peter 5:6-7 KJV

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

1. Has anxiety ever overwhelmed you? What daily practices have you found that help you get rid of anxiety and worry?
2. How can you cast down negative thoughts and instead choose thoughts that point you to God?
3. What can you do today to seek first God's kingdom?
4. What does humility look like to you?

PART 17: DECEITFULNESS OF RICHES

RECAP

One of the weed seeds that Jesus warns about in the parable of the sower is the deceitfulness of riches. Now, this weed seed—or you could say worldly idea—doesn't refer only to the people who have great wealth. It refers to excess over need. When you have even a few dollars left after your need is met, you have the potential to be lured away from the Word of God by the deceitfulness of money. That doesn't mean money is bad. Money is a medium of exchange in this natural world, but if your trust and security lies in your bank account taking care of you rather than God, you'll also find that you can be more easily deceived.

If the Devil can't deceive you, he can't defeat you! That's why it is important to learn how to relate rightly to money in this natural world.

DIVE DEEPER:

God's Word is clear about money. Riches can be deceitful. They can draw you away from trusting in God for your security. Money itself isn't bad, but how you relate to it—do you love it?—is what we need to understand.

Remember, the enemy's purpose is to deceive you and draw you away from truth. If he can't deceive you, he can't defeat you. According to Jesus' parable of the sower, deception is linked with money. That means deception in any area may just hinge on how you handle your money. If you get it right on money, you close the door on deception as a strategy.

So how does God want you to spend your money? First, you close the door on deception by tithing. Tithing is when you bring the first tenth of your increase to the local church (or storehouse) that God has called you to be. This moves your trust away from your paycheck to God as your provider. Second, you understand how money can be used to promote the kingdom of God on this earth through over-and-above giving.

You see, this is about your heart. God wants your heart. He doesn't want your heart to be entangled with the kingdom of this world, even though you operate in it. Placing God first in your money is key.

READ MORE

Mark 4:18-19 KJV

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Mark 4:18-19 Amp.

And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word, but the worries and cares of the world [the distractions of this age with its worldly pleasures], and the deceitfulness [and the false security or glamour] of wealth [or fame], and the passionate desires for all the other things creep in and choke out the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

1 Timothy 6:9-10 KJV

But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

1 Timothy 6:17-19 KJV

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Matthew 6:19-24 KJV

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

James 1:22 KJV

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

Malachi 3:10-11 KJV

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.

Hebrews 7:1-2 KJV

For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace;

2 Corinthians 9:6-11 KJV

But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: (as it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;) being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

1. Have you seen the difference tithing can make in your life?
2. Have you seen the impact sowing and reaping can have on your finances?
3. Why do you think the use of our money matters to God?
4. What does God do for us in return as we take care of His Kingdom first in our finances?

PART 18: LUST OF OTHER THINGS

RECAP

As the seed of God's Word grows in our lives, we need to be aware of weed seeds that are growing at the same time. Weed seeds are ideas that are contrary to God's Word. One group of weed seeds that Jesus talks about in the parable of the sower is the "lusts of other things." That word "lusts" can best be described as a great desire or craving. When our desires are focused on self-gratification, we create entanglements within our relationships. We choke out the light of God's Word when selfish lusts become priority in our lives. The antidote for this problem? Get your eyes off your own self and onto helping others.

DIVE DEEPER

Relationships matter. In fact, relationships affect most of everything we do here on earth. That's why the final group of weed seeds that Jesus talked about in the parable of the sower is important to understand. The seed of God's Word will be choked out when we allow the "lusts of other things" to become prominent in our lives.

Now, some ignore that word "lust" because they relate it with sexual gratification. However, lust refers to cravings or desires in a much more general sense. When we continually focus on and gratify cravings for sensual pleasures in this natural world that gratify our own self, we're setting ourselves up for difficulties.

You see, we need to take care of our own selves, but when taking care of our own selves becomes the sole focus of our lives, we miss one of the greatest opportunities God gives us: the chance to help others. Focusing on helping others allows love to become the driving force in our lives rather than lust. Most of all, when we focus on helping others, we give God the opportunity to take care of our own lives.

Remember, natural cravings aren't necessarily bad. It's when they become our sole focus that problems arise. Lust wrecks relationships—and our relationships are intricately connected with so much of our daily living. Don't ruin a relationship when you can instead enhance it by learning how to put first the needs of others and let God take care of you.

READ MORE

Mark 4:18-19 KJV

And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

James 4:1-3 KJV

From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

James 4:1-3 Amp.

What leads to strife (discord and feuds) and how do conflicts (quarrels and fightings) originate among you? Do they not arise from your sensual desires that are ever warring in your bodily members? You are jealous and covet [what others have] and your desires go unfulfilled; [so] you become murderers. [To hate is to murder as far as your hearts are concerned.] You burn with envy and anger and are not able to obtain [the gratification, the contentment, and the happiness that you seek], so you fight and war. You do not have, because you do not ask. [Or] you do ask [God for them] and yet fail to receive, because you ask with wrong purpose and evil, selfish motives. Your intention is [when you get what you desire] to spend it in sensual pleasures.

James 1:2-4 KJV

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

James 1:12-15 KJV

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

1 John 4:18 KJV

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love..

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

1. Have you ever seen selfish desire ruin a relationship in your life or in someone else's life?
2. How are you affected when other people put you first? What does it make you want to do for them in return?
3. What's one thing you can do today to bless other people in your life?

PART 19: THE HARVEST

RECAP

The final step in the process of sowing and reaping is the harvest. The harvest is the product of external change wrought by the Word of God sown into someone else. This is different from the fruit you will bear in your own life from the seed of God's Word planted in your life. The fruit in your life is the peace of God and the joy of God, the fruit of the Spirit manifest. The harvest is receiving God's promises in your life.

DIVE DEEPER

Based on Jesus' parable of the sower, we see that one out of four people will produce a harvest in life. That harvest is not the fruit that you bear in your own life. That fruit—the peace, joy, and love of God—is a harvest for other people to benefit from. Fruit bearing is the result of internal change, and just as an apple tree doesn't produce apples for its own benefit, you produce fruit in your life that will benefit those around you.

Your harvest is the product of external change wrought by the Word of God sown in someone else. As you plant the seed of God's Word in others, you'll prepare a harvest of good things in your own life. Your harvest is God's promises manifest in you. When you see that the fruit of your life is ready for others to harvest, that's when you can put out your sickle of faith and bring in the harvest of God's promises for you.

There is one way you can get seed in the ground before you produce fruit in your own life and that is through using your money to support the preaching of the Gospel. When you support others as they bring the Word of God before people you can't reach on your own, you are supporting the Word being planted in others and preparing a harvest of good things in your life.

READ MORE:

Mark 4:3-20 KJV

Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow: and it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: but when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. And some fell among

thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred. And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them. And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables? The sower soweth the word. And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; and have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

1. Where are you in the process of seed time and harvest? Is your heart filled with hard ground, shallow, rocky, or good soil?
2. What can you do to prepare the soil of your heart to receive God's Word and cultivate its growth in your life?
3. What can you do to plant the Word of God in other people's lives?
4. Are you ready to bring in the harvest using the sickle of your faith?