

Caught among the Thorns

Mark 4:3-9, 18-19

Introduction:

- A. Too many are involved in hard-core worldliness: Sensuality, drinking, loose morals.
- B. Far more Christians are caught up in soft-core worldliness
 - 1. Too involved in the affairs of this life. (2 Tim. 2:4)
 - 2. Too much love for the present world (2 Tim. 4:10).
 - 3. Too much emphasis in the wrong places. (Col. 3:2; 1 Pet. 3:3,4).
- C. Too many Christians are caught among the three kinds of thorns of verse 19.

Discussion:

I. The Cares of this World.

- A. Distracting cares¹ or preoccupations that hinder spiritual growth and service.
- B. Minds and schedules filled with things of this life, no room for spiritual matters.
 - 1. Too concerned about making a living. (Matt. 6:25-33)
 - 2. Too concerned about the future. (Matt. 6:34).
 - 3. Too busy “majoring in minors.” (Cf. Luke 10:38-42; Ill: Greasing wagon).

II. The Deceitfulness of Riches.

- A. The *possession* of riches can allure one into a false sense of security.
 - 1. As individuals (Cf. Lk 12:15-21)
 - 2. As congregations (Rev. 3:17,18)
- B. The *pursuit* of riches can pervert one’s sense of moral and spiritual values.
 - 1. Gambling (wasting God’s blessings) may seem like innocent past-time. (cf. Lk. 15:13).
 - 2. Pilfering from an employer may seem like collecting what’s due. (Cf. Tit. 2:10-12).
 - 3. Withholding all or part of what is due others may seem like good management.
 - a. Withholding just wages (Jas. 5:4).
 - b. Withholding from family members. (Matt. 15:4-6; 1 Tim. 5:8).
 - c. Withholding offerings (Mal 3:8; 1 Cor. 16:1,2; 2 Cor. 8 and 9).
 - 4. Choosing to miss services for extra money may seem like being good provider.

III. The Desire for Other Things.

- A. Desire for *pleasure / fun* (Lk. 8:14).
 - 1. Chooses hobbies, sports, etc. over spiritual responsibilities.
 - 2. Seeks fun in religion – activities must be fun to attract and hold him (cf. Ex. 32:6)
- B. Desire to *popularity / prestige* (John 12:43)
- C. Desire for *power / preeminence* (Matt. 18:1-4)

Conclusion:

- A. More choked to death by thorns of respectable worldliness than classical lusts.
- B. Must set our minds on things above and not on the earth. (Col. 3:2).

¹ *An Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words*. W. E. Vine, p. 89.