***The Parable of the Sower and the Seed

Colossians 2:18-19

COL-452***

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2 Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture is inspired by God, and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

Corinthians 2:9: "Just as it is written: 'Things which eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man: all that God has prepared for those who love Him. For to us, God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.'"

Romans 15:4: "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction - that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope."

This morning, we continue in our study of Colossians 2:18-19 on "The Era of Angelic Worship, segment number 9.

This particular passage of Scripture, beginning at Colossians 2:18, is a warning, basically, against negative volition to what is God's Word; to what is God's mind; and, to what is the truth. That is such an easy thing to say. Yet, it is so prominent, and it so easily slips up upon us, that in a moment of thoughtlessness, negative volition toward the Word of God brings terrible consequences.

The Lord Jesus Christ saw this happening to His beloved nation of Israel. After that Palm Sunday, when they had rejected Him, He said on an elevated place, looking down on Jerusalem, perhaps with some tears in His eyes. We have His words recorded in Matthew 23:37-38: "O Jerusalem. Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her. How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wing. And you were unwilling." That is negative revelation: "Butt out God. I thumb my nose at you." Verse 38: "Behold, consequently, your house. It is being left to you desolate."

How sad this was. For centuries they waited for the Messiah King to come. And there He was. He had finally arrived. And He presented himself with the final authentication of riding into Jerusalem on that coat, and the people recognize it. And they shouted, "Hosanna, save us (Lord, save us, Lord, save us)." But the leaders were blind and negative. And when your leaders are blind and negative, they lead you astray. Don't kick around a good leader. Don't be putting on him your own responsibility and your own negative volition. These are failures. It is not his fault. His job is to teach you how to fight the battle. But if you are careless and incompetent in using the weapons of spiritual warfare, it's not his fault. Once you get out in the field, you're expected to follow the instruction and the guidelines, and the way things should be done.

Jesus had another one of those poignant moments recorded for us in John 6:66-69. He had the 12 apostles who were following Him, but he had many more people who followed Him, and listened to His teaching. They are also called disciples. And in John 6:66, He has just (in the context, previously) been telling these people what is involved; Who He is; what He can do for them in salvation; what He will bring to them in spiritual life; and, what He will do to elevate them above the masses of animal living on this earth. These are all of the great things that come from God the Father, through the Son, and through Him alone. <0>In John 6:66, this mass of people had followed and listened to Him as a result of this instruction: "Many of His disciples withdrew (negative volition), and were not talking with Him anymore." This can happen in a snap of a finger. You can know a lot about the Word of God; how to walk; the way it ought to be; and, how you should be conducting yourself. An in a moment of carnality, and in a moment of sin nature domination, the devil comes in, and he blindsides you, and you walk right out of the will of God. And you look back and say, "How could I have been negative? What in the world possessed my thinking? How could I have arched my back like a cat snarling against the Almighty?

"As the result of this, many of His disciples (not the 12) withdrew, and were not walking with Him anymore." Then here is the poignant part: The 12 disciples, therefore, looked around themselves, and Jesus and the 12 are all that's left. The rest of them were gone: those who wanted to make Jesus a political King; those who wanted to make Jesus their bread King; and, who wanted to make him the source of providing them with all the things they needed in life. That's why they wanted to elevate Him, and that's why they were following Him: for what they could get out of him.

"But Jesus turned to the 12, and said, "You do not want to go away also, do you?" What a sad question: "You 12, are you going to walk away from Me too, because of what I have told you of what the Father thinks? Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of the eternal life. And we have believed, and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God. So, we're not going to be negative. We're not going to thumb our nose at You. We're not going to arch our back, and storm off in our arrogance as if we knew better."

This business of being negative to the Word of God has dire consequences. And those of you, because you are so often well-trained in the Word of God, and you know your way around in spiritual things, and you understand, when you read your newspaper, what on earth is going to happening to the world. You know where it's all going. You know that you better start packing your gear, and getting ready for the rapture. But in a moment of carelessness, negative attention will bring you down.

Jesus tried to make this clear one time. And this is what has to do with Colossians 2:18. Don't let anybody rob you of your prize, in grace-age Christianity privileges and spiritual power. How can you be robbed? Well, in negative edition? God said, "This is a bad investment of your life. You go ahead and do it (negative volition to God). It's like having a financial adviser who knows his way around: "This is a bad stock to buy. Don't mess with that." But you go negative, and say, "Oh, I like it. I like the perspective. I like the brochure. I'm going to buy it." And you tank out on it.

God is always saying, "That's bad. This is good. Do it this way. This the way it ought to be." And don't change, and do it your way, because you'll go astray.

So, the Lord knew that this problem was always with us. It can happen that all of your church-age, royal-family-of-God status can just be blown off. And it will be very sad. And I don't want to be responsible for this, but this will cause you to stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and you'll realize what could have been in your life: your span of days; your circumstances; your ability; your possessions; your knowledge of the deep things of the Word of God; and, that you were negative toward your opportunity.

**The Parable of the Sower and the Seed**

The Lord dealt with this in a parable than He once taught about the sower and the seed. And we're going to bounce back and forth between the gospels which record this particular parable. A parable is a way of illustrating a spiritual truth by a story. Jesus did a lot of that sort of thing. He had this parable (a story) to illustrate some spiritual truths. This parable is about a man going through the field, sowing seed (the farmer sowing his seed). And the way they did it was by throwing (broadcasting). They'd throw out a handful, and they'd throw it out, and they throw it out. So, where it ended up had various results.

So, Luke 8:4 tells us that Jesus was speaking to a great multitude that were coming together from everywhere – from the various cities nearby. They were journeying to Him. So, He spoke to them in a parable. He's going to tell them: "The worst thing in life you can do is to say "no" to God's Word – to say no to what the Word of God teaches; or, to say "no" to a spiritual principle. And you will do that because the world will confuse you; the devil will blind you (if you're out of fellowship); and, your friends and your society will corrupt you. And American society is extremely corrupting to the spiritual life of a believer.

So, Jesus is trying to prepare these people to rise to their opportunity: "You people have traveled a long distance; you've come from cities roundabout; and, you took the trouble to be here. Now, don't blow it by walking off," as those people did that we just previously read. And Jesus, in sadness, turns to His disciples and says, "Are you going to walk off too?"

**The First Type of Soil**

Luke 8:5: "The sower went out to sow his seed. And as He sowed, some fell beside the road, and it was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air ate it up." So, the sower was scattering his seed. Some of it falls beside the road. And people come along, and they walk over it, and kill it. The birds see it, and they pop on the thing, and they eat it up.

We're told in verse 11 that the seed is the Word of God. So, we get the picture immediately of what the point of the parable is. Here is someone who is going around, and he's teaching principles of divine viewpoint, as a farmer scattering the nourishing food that will grow up into a crop.

So, the seed of the Word of God is good. Please remember in all these four different types of variants of those who are hearing, that the seed is always good. The person who hears is the soil, and the soil is what is negative. And that is where the problem lies.

So, the good seed is trampled underfoot, or eaten by the birds. And it is the Word of God. The Bible, reveals the divine viewpoint truth of the mind of God. That's the only place we do find it. The pope can't give it to you. The famous, mouthful-of-teeth smile, pulpit personality can't give it to you. It's only what comes from Scripture that is what God thinks. The way spiritual things are, is found in the Bible – not the human viewpoint of man's delusions.

So, here the soil is representing a certain type of person. He hears the truth of God taught: the truth about grace salvation; to sanctified living; and, to grace age differences between Israel and the church, which is the point in Colossians. Don't go back to Israel. Don't leave the church ground, which is the high ground in the battle. Israel is the low ground. And you don't want to be on the low ground in a combat situation. You always want to be on the high ground – the place of advantage, and service to God. So, the truth brings you grace salvation; how to live a godly life; how to serve God; and, and how to receive rewards in heaven.

Now, Satan comes along like the bird. He snatches away the good seed of the Word of God, because the person who is listening is indifferent. He hears the gospel, and he yawns: "Oh yeah." He's indifferent. He doesn't really pay much attention to what you're saying. So, the word is falling on deaf ears.

Luke 8:12 gives us this explanation: "And those (the seeds) beside the road are those who have heard." When the devil comes and takes away the Word from their heart (from their mind), so that they may not believe and be saved. These people hear the gospel of the grace of God. They listen with indifference, and they never connect with the reality of what is being said. The hearer, thus, exercises what? Negative volition to the gospel. And what's the result" He's, not saved. People do this all the time.

One time our family was on vacation. We were trailering up in Utah (Mormon territory). And we had a repair need on our trailer. And we were in an area which I could call a trailer repair place. And a man said, "Do you know where the IMAX theater parking lot is." I said, "Yeah." He said, "Okay, I'll meet you there."

So, he came out with his truck, and his tools, and his helper, and we worked out the problem. And I gathered (from some things, as we talked) that he was a Mormon. So, when he finished, I gave him one of our evangelism brochures. And I said, "Here's a little booklet that deals with how to save your life for eternity in heaven." And he said, "No, I wouldn't want to read that, I wouldn't care about that." Now, if he's a Mormon, he thought that he already had it made, and that he was someday going to be a god.

This was exactly the picture here: of seed which fell. And this man didn't even get to the point where he looked at the sea, let alone to eat it, and respond to it. So, what he did was that he completely rejected an offer of an opportunity to know the truth of the way of God to eternal life. I wonder how things are with that man today. I wonder how things will be with him in eternity. To reject a Christian who speaks the truth of the Word of God is negative volition of the most insane kind.

In John 15:18-19, Jesus said to us: "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you." If you were of the world, and if you were one of the gang of the world system of Satan, the world would love its own: "But because you're not of the world, because I chose you out of the world, therefore, the world hates you." That repairman was casting away, with his negative volition, the seed of the gospel of the grace of God with a contemptuous, indifferent wave of his hand.

Satan, thus, is able to blind the mind of the lost to the truth of the gospel by simply keeping them in the dark. He keeps them from getting the nourishing truth of the gospel. He keeps them in the dark. He puts them in a situation as if they were in a room, and somebody hit the switch, and it is completely blacked out. Yet, that's the kind of life that people live all the time. They are in a completely dark room spiritually, and they're feeling their way around. They're very confident that they know what's going on. And they're mulling around, bumping into things, and wounding themselves. And, finally, they go to their eternal destruction. We have some reason to believe that hell is an eternally, pitch-black dark place.

In 2 Corinthians 4:3-4, the apostle says, "But if our gospel has failed, it has failed to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world (Satan) has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they may not see the light of the gospel, of the glory of Christ, Who is the image of God?" They do not see that the glory that Christ bore was the glory of deity – the very Son of God, Who was qualified and capable of dying to pay for their sins, and to give them eternal life.

This first-soil type was represented in Jesus' Day by the Pharisees and the religious leaders of Israel. Those fellows knew the Old Testament Scriptures, and they were arrogantly confident under their Judaism, and under their Mosaic Law works system. And as the apostle Paul pointed out, the Mosaic Law will never will lead anybody to heaven. There's nothing about the Mosaic Law that is designed to get you saved. The Mosaic Law only had one thing. The Mosaic Law was designed for you to see how rotten and simply disgusting in sin you are. And you can't do anything about it.

And that comes as a shock to people. The other day, I took a bath. And after I got dressed, something distracted me – a phone call or something. So, I got that, and we went off to supper. And after supper, I happened to walk by a mirror, and I looked, and my hair was all over the place. I said, "I haven't even combed my hair. It was just the way it came out of the dripping water. I was horrified. What if I had gone to church like that? I looked almost like one of the Beatles.

So, when you see yourself as you really are, and you can't hide it, that gets to be a shock. I mean, it is terrible to finally realize this is the way that you are. And according to the Word of God (the Mosaic Law), I just want to show you that you're done for. Your goose is cooked. You can go ahead and play with those games. You can go to church on Saturday. You can have your holy days. You can do your priestly robes. You can burn your candles. You can burn your incense. You can go through your little rituals. It's not going to make you saved. You are doomed. That's not the way, and the Mosaic Law never was designed for that.

However, the Pharisees were so arrogant. They said, "Oh yeah, we keep the Law. Listen. I take out ten seeds of my crop, and I lay them on the table. And I put take out one of those seeds. I'm a tither, and I give it to God. And I take the other nine, and I put them in my bag. Then I lay out ten more seeds, and I take one, and I put it in the Lord's box. The rest I stick in my bag." That's why people love tithing today, because they think that nine-tenths belongs to them. Well, nothing of the Mosaic Law was there, but the Pharisees were arrogant because they tithed. They told Jesus that: "We know that we're people of God." Well, they kept the ritual, but they refuse to listen to the Word of God through Jesus, their own Messiah. And they would not listen about how to really be saved.

So, what did Satan do? Here are the leaders of Israel. In heaven's name, if you can't have some confidence in your preacher, or your spiritual guide, where can you expect to have some spiritual reality and orientation? But Satan blinded these men (these religious leaders), so that they exercised negative volition to the truth of the gospel of the grace of God. They were the soil where the seed fell by the wayside. They wouldn't even listen to Jesus. They passed him off: "Who do you think you are? Do you realize that you're talking to seminary graduates here? We are the scribes. We are the Pharisees. We know the Scriptures." And what they were talking about was Satan's blindness.

So, this is it, folks. Any believer who does not attend, regularly, a congregation of expository preaching instruction – the guy who's in a room, and the switch light has been turned off, and he is dark. This is true of unbelievers all the time, but it is also true of Christians. When was the last time to reach up there, and you not going the switch off, and left yourself in the dark? Was it fun? Did it make you happy? Did you find the rejoicing in the things of God that you now had in your life, and the blessings that were pouring out?

If you go back to the Mosaic Law, and that ritual system, you're reaching up, and you're switching off the light of divine viewpoint instruction that you get in expository preaching – the teaching of church-age doctrine.

**The Second Type of Soil**

In Luke 8:6, there is a second kind of soil: "And other seed, as a farmer through it about, fell on rocky soil. As soon as it grew up, it withered away because it had no moisture. This seed, again, is what? The Word of God. It is being scattered. It falls on rocky soil; that is, it falls on a thin layer of soil on a rock ledge. This is the same good seed of the gospel as was used in the first soil. Here, the seed does sprout, but promptly it withers away. It does not come to fruition. It does not come to salvation. It has no moisture in the soil, and therefore, there is no lifeline. In this case, the seed is falling on soil where there is no depth, and no reality.

This is very prominent today. We live in a religious climate of emotionalism. You cannot believe what goes on in churches, even Bible churches, where emotionalism takes over in place of spiritual reality and instruction. You cannot believe what is done with young people, that they can bring in by the carloads, in order to give them a great emotional zapping experience, and make them talk about religious things like they know something about the Lord. This actually had a joyful response. He had an emotional response to the gospel.

Matthew 13:20 also records this parable: "The one on whom the seed was sown on the rocky place – this is the man who hears the Word, and immediately receives it (with what?) – joy" (emotion). He hears it. Boy, it was great emotion. He was so enthusiastic for that.

Many years ago, I had a man, when we were still in the old auditorium, who came to church. I didn't know anything about his background. I knew his wife. She had finally gotten him to come, because she was attending. And after he went out, he said, "Boy, now that's the kind of preaching I like. That's the kind of preaching I'll come to hear." Well, that certainly make me feel good. So, he does come for a little bit, and all of a sudden he's not enthusiastically there anymore. When I asked his wife, she said, "Well he's a Unitarian." Unitarian doesn't believe that there's a Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. There's only a God Who sometimes shows Himself as the Father, and He turns around, and He looks like the Son, then He turns around, and He looks like the Holy Spirit. That is complete heresy. This man was an unbeliever, but boy, was he enthusiastic for my preaching. Do you see how good I am?

This guy was bubbling over. My own church members don't bubble over like that to me at the end of a search. But this guy is this soil – rocky soil. He was emotional, but he had no depth, so there's nothing that can develop. There's no mental belief in the Lord Jesus Christ – just excitement. There's no decision of trusting in the payment of Jesus Christ for the sin of the cross. There is emotion without substance. There's not realizing: "I'm going to go out of his life into eternity, through death. But it's OK. I'm in Christ. I'm home – clear and safe. And I left behind me a heritage of great Christian service. It's going to be waiting for me." There's no decision on the part of this yahoo, who gets emotionally up, because he hears the Word of the gospel. He's a temporary enthusiast. And we have this all the time in the Christian light – these people who come on with great zeal and great enthusiasm, and then wear out, and drop off by the wayside.

This plant has no route to the sustaining moisture of the water of life, which is in Jesus Christ. That was the problem. He did not have the water of life which was in Christ. Therefore, he could not be saved.

In Luke 8:13, we read, "And those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the Word with joy. And these have no firm root. They believe for a while, and in time of temptation, fall away." When the sun shines down on the sprouted plant in the shallow soil, it withers. And when it is an emotional profession, that's shallow soil. It gets scorched and it withers away.

In Mark 4:5-6, which also records this parable, it presents in this way: "And other seed fell on the rocky ground where did not have much soil. Immediately, it sprang up because it had no depth of soil. And after the sun had risen, it was scorched, and because it had no root, it withered away. So, this second soil here has merely some kind of an emotional profession of faith in Christ. So, he's exercising negative attention again to the seed of the gospel.

Matthew 13:21: "Yet, he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary. And then affliction or persecution arises, as the pressure of the sun upon him, because of their Word, immediately falls away.

The second soil professing here type meets the scorching heat of affliction and persecution in Satan's world, because he's an enthusiast for Jesus Christ. So, the devil comes in on him. He quickly falls away, and then he abandons his zeal.

Mark 4:16-17, says, "In a similar manner, these are the ones to whom the seed was sown on rocky soil, who, when they hear the Word, immediately, they receive it with an emotion of joy, and they have no firm root in themselves, but they are temporary. And then when affliction or persecution arises, because of the Word, immediately, they fall away, because they're committing themselves to Jesus Christ.

How many people do you think are like this? At the end of some church service, some hotshot preacher, who can raise peoples' emotions, invites them to walk down the aisle and be saved. And they come with their great enthusiasm and zeal. How many of those do you think fit into this kind of soil? "Somebody has zapped me up. And they don't know what the gospel is. They don't know what the gospel is. It's the enthusiasm of the moment. And they haven't been saved.

I went through that myself. That one I can relate to. I was a 12-year-old boy in the Boy Scouts, at a little church on the corner. They take us up on a campout, at Pentwater, Michigan. And while we're they're up there, and the pastor is there with us, we're having a great time out in the field on this campout. They're having a revival service in town. So, all the boys go, and we're all sitting there. I'm sitting with a friend next to me. At the end of the service, of which I don't know anything, and didn't pay much attention to, they're inviting people down the aisle. People are walking here, and coming out here, and my friend says, "Do you want to go down?" And I said, "Yeah, if you do." So, we did.

We hump down there. He thought they were giving something away. So, we're up there in the front, and I'm down there with them. And I wasn't saved. And I'm down there with that crowd, down at the altar. And then it's all over.

We get back that the next Sunday. The pastor is giving a report on the campout. He told how the boys attended this evangelistic meeting. And then he said, "And two of our boys were saved." Bingo! Now the light dawned. I realize that I was one of them. And I didn't even know it. It was supposedly because the revivalist prayed over us. But it was fun. I was enthusiastic. I humped down here with my friend, with all these people walking down in this crowd.

I was shocked recently to read that a major evangelist said: "Of the people who come forward in my meetings at these great stadiums, and these great rallies, 75% of them drop off within a short period of time. That's here. We have four soils. Three of them bear nothing – 75%. That was interesting.

So, anyhow, this second type of soil is the soil of shallow enthusiasm – somebody who is on a high to be religious. But when the persecution and the demands of life, and especially when we put pressure on you, because you're getting religious, they drop away.

In Jesus' day, this soil was also represented in the many who excitedly gathered about Him, just as we read this morning, when the disciples left Him, when they realized that they had to make a commitment to Him – a faith in Him, and a trust in Him. And they weren't going to get anything material back for it. So, their enthusiasm drained off. These people following Him because of the miracles of healing that He performed, and the miracles of feeding them. That's what they wanted from Him. They, however, did not believe His gospel message, and the result was that they remained lost.

John 6:64-66: "But there are some of you who do not believe," Jesus says to some of these people who are with Him. Some of them did not believe: "For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him. He was saying, "For this reason, I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless he has been granted him from the Father. As a result of this, many of His disciples withdrew, and we're not walking with Him anymore. So, those in the second soil, were in the religious enthusiasm of the moment, but this was not reality. And these people end up with negative volition – that deadly thing again.

**The Third Type of Soil**

Now, in Luke 8:7, here's a third kind of soil: "And other seed fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up with it, and choked it." You want to remember that, while you are a saved Christian, the same kind of bad soil attitudes can be found in us. That's one of the applications we need to have in the back of our mind as we read these. The other seed (still the good seed), fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up with it, and choked it out. This seed of the Word of God falls among a patch of thorns. The thorns grow up, and the gospel is choked out.

This third type of soil are those who have heard this seed of the Word of God. He's interested. But he has other interests in daily life, and those other interests choke out the seed of the gospel.

Luke 8:14 gives us the explanation: "And the seed, which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard. And as they go on their way, they are choked with worries, and riches, and pleasures of this life, and they bring no fruit to maturity." Aha, do you see how this rings with even us as Christians. This seed, the good seed of the Word of God, falls upon a certain kind of soil that has a lot of thorns in its life. What are the thorns? They're the ones who are worried. They are fretters. They have riches. They're worried about riches. They're worried about their future. They have pleasures. They're worried about the things of this life. They are choked out by the worries of this age in their daily living. They're always focused on what might happen to them.

In Matthew 6:25, Jesus said, "For this reason I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, as to what you shall eat, or what you shall drink, nor for your body, as to what you should put on. Is not life more than food, and body than clothing?" Yes it is. You can have all the money in the world, so that you never worry about what you're going to eat; what you're going to have in the way of beverages; what you're going to have that your body needs; what you're going to have to put on; or, where you're going to live, but you still don't have a life. To many a Christian who has everything in the world that he needs, he needs to be told that this phrase applies to him: "Get a life." That is because without a spiritual life, you have nothing. And Jesus says, "Stop fretting about what might happen. God is caring for you."

Matthew 6:34: "Therefore, do not be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." That's right: "Lord, I live one day at a time, and I expect you to supply me the logistical means of carrying on your business for my daily service to you, and my life – at my station in life. And I thank you for that. I can trust you to do that. Now, let's get on with what I can do for You."

So, these people are choked out by the deceitfulness of riches – this deceptive lure of wealth. They're choked up by their fretting and worries about what may happen, and by the deceitfulness of their riches.

Matthew 4:19 puts it this way: "Seed fell among the thorns (the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches), and the desire for things enters in, and chokes the Word, and it becomes unfruitful." They are negative to God, your father – this great provider, and this gracious person. They are negative to Him over the deceitfulness of riches.

Boy, how many Christians I have seen in my half-century in the ministry, who, when they had little in life, they were knocking themselves around here in God's service. They were princes and princesses among us. We depended on them. We looked forward to them. We would come to these various ministries, and we'd stand up, and we'd look to see them there, on the job, standing in the line, ready to roll. And then they were blessed with material things. And they had to buy themselves a little lake house. And they had to buy themselves little toys to play on the lake with. And they're very busy all week long, so the only time they had to play at the lake was on the weekends: "Well, we're still going to come to church, even though we do this on the weekends. They would drive this distance. And pretty soon, they dropped off, and we didn't see them anymore.

When they get to heaven, they're going to say, "Do you know when my life stopped, and I lost my life? It was when I got financially well off. I looked at the clock up there. My riches were piling up, once I got well-off and I didn't have to worry about all these material things, so that I had great freedom to serve God, but I couldn't do it. That's when my life stopped.

In Luke 18:22-23, Jesus is speaking to the rich young ruler: "The rich young ruler said, 'I've kept all the commandments.' So, Jesus said to him, "One thing you still lack. Sell all that you possess, and distribute it to the poor, and you shall have treasures in heaven. And instead, come and follow Me." Send your money up ahead, and store it there.

In verse 23, we see negative volition – this third soil: "But when he had heard these things, this rich young ruler became very sad, for he was extremely rich." People who can handle their poverty, very often, cannot handle their prosperity.

Notice Luke 12:15: "And he said, 'Beware. Be on your guard against every form of greed, for not even when one has an abundance, does his life consist of his possessions." Never forget that your things are your toys. They're nothing. That's not your life. Your life is fulfilling your mission as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and in doing the mission which He lays on your heart, and that He has enabled you to do. He's not going to ask you to do something that He doesn't give you the means to do. But when He does, you want to rise to the challenge.

Hebrews 13:5-6: "Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.' So, we confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper. I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me? That's your answer to: "Gee, what might happen in the future if I don't pile up earthly treasures for myself?" What might happen in the future? God will take care of you. That's what will happen.

Then the third result, of the thorns that were choking this person's life, was the pleasures of this life – the desire for things. In Mark 4:19: "And the worries of the world, the deceitfulness for riches, and the desire for other things enter in to choke." To be able to have things; to be able to buy things; to be able to possess things; and, to live for things, all of which are going to be burned up when Christ returns in judgment on this world, eventually, at the end of the tribulation, and a new heaven and a new earth is created.

1 Timothy 6:6-10 tell us: "But godliness actually is a means of great gain." Spiritual maturity, through expository instruction to which you are positive – there's where your riches lie. That's the life. You have a life. Godliness actually is a means of great gain, when accompanied by contentment: "For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. And if we have food and covering, with these, we shall be content. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare, and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge men into ruin and destruction." This is the third soil type: "For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil. And some, by longing for it, have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many pangs."

Is it wrong to want to have a lot of money? No. Is it nice to have a lot of money? Yes. That's not what Scripture is condemning. It's making that your life – falling in love with your toys and your things. The Word of God (the gospel seed) in this soil bears no fruit. This is the hearer who exercised negative addition to all spiritual things, including the gospel. So, he has is. Matthew 13:22 says, "And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the Word, and the worry of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful." The gospel does not bear the fruit of eternal life in him.

This third type of soil was evident in Jesus day in the rich young ruler, who could not bear to think of giving up his property for Christ, and his work. It was just more than he could stand. And he went away sorrowful, and Jesus again had the poignant feeling, as he did for Israel, because negative volition prevented him from putting his arms around that boy, and saying, "Now you have a life, and I'm going to make you a very rich man in heaven.

Then comes the fourth soil – the way it ought to be. This is the one you really want to know about, and we should look at that tonight.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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