

## CLEARING THE THORNS FROM THE THORNY GROUND

(Parable of the Sower)

(Paparoa CF - 5/10/97 - EKB)

Reading - *Lk 8:5-9, 11-15.*

1. God works in us and through us, by sowing His Word in our heart.
2. As we receive and hold onto the Word in faith, it grows and produces much fruit.
3. However three other things can happen to the Word.
4. It can fall on **hardness of heart** and be snatched away by Satan.
5. Or it can fall on **shallow, stony soil**, grow a little, and then die when the sun dries out the ground. The sun equals tests and trials against the Word, *Mat 13:21*.
6. Also the seed can fall on **thorny ground** where it is choked and produces no fruit. The thorns equal **the distractions of cares, riches and pleasures of life**.
7. Today we are talking about the **thorny ground**.
8. **Firstly the “cares” of life.** Jesus gives repeated warnings not to be anxious at all about what you will eat, what you will drink or what you will put on, as you live to serve Him and obey His Word, *Mat 6:25*. Four times He says, “do not be anxious” or worry, *Mat 6:25,28,31,34*, including not to worry about tomorrow. He says, “Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you,” *Mat 6:33*. Our Father cares for the birds, that neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and we are of much more value to Him than they are, *v26*.
9. One day Jesus visited Martha and Mary, *Lk 10:38-42*. Martha was “distracted with much serving,” but Mary sat at Jesus’ feet and listened to His Word. Martha became angry that Mary wasn’t helping and complained to Jesus. He said, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary and Mary has chosen it.” Worry distracts us from God’s Word.
10. In the early 1970’s, God called us to give up our employment as a teacher and give ourselves to travel and teach and preach the Word to Northland churches. Before we could do this, the thorns of worry about provision of food, drink, clothes, transport, accommodation, and money for many other things for our family of six had to be removed. It was not easy at times, but faith in His promises to provide brought us through, especially, *Phil 4:19, Ruth 2:12*. Today is nearly the end of our twentieth year full time and all we can say is, “Thank You, thank You God! You are faithful!”
11. *1Pet 5:7, Ps 55:22, Pro 16:3(AMP)*. Cast every care on Him, because He cares for you.
12. **Secondly riches.** One day a young man came to Jesus and asked how to receive eternal life. *Lk 18:18-27*. Jesus listed some of the Ten Commandments and the young man said he had kept these from when he was young. Jesus looked at him and said, “One thing you lack. Sell all you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven.” But he was sad at this Word, and went away grieved, for he had great possessions, *Mk 10:22*. In *Mk 10:24*, Jesus said, “How hard it is for those **who trust in riches** to enter the

Kingdom of God.” It was not the having of riches and possessions that was the problem, (see *1Tim 6:17*), but the trusting in them that kept him from obeying Jesus’ Word to him.

13. In one of His parables, Jesus told the story of a rich man, *Lk 12:16-21*, who had a year of bumper crops. He pulled down the old barns and built big new ones and said to himself, “I have many goods laid up for many years, and so I will take my ease, eat, drink, and be merry.” But God said, “You are a fool, because this night your soul is required of you!” Jesus added, “Everyone who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God, is a fool like him.”
14. Perhaps you know of a friend who has been called by God to serve Him, but has gradually turned his back on the call of God, to spend his time looking after the family fortune, or seeking to become wealthy.
15. Possessions and riches pose a trap to all of us. Jesus said that there is something in us, that is of more value than owning all the wealth that there is in the world, all the buildings, cars, planes, ships, land, food, seas, trees, animals, and so on, and that is our own soul, *Lk 9:25*.
16. All we can see, touch and possess in this material realm of wealth is about to pass away, *2Pet 3:10*. It is not eternal. But our soul is eternal and lasts forever. Make sure your treasure is in heaven, not on earth, *Mat 6:19,20,21, 2Cor 4:18*.
17. God has written “**FINISHED**” over the whole world. So give up what you can’t keep, to gain eternal treasure which you can’t lose! *1Jn 2:17*.
18. What we can see is non-permanent, but the things of God are eternal. (Salvation, faith, truth, eternal life), *2Cor 4:18*.  
**Declare:** “All I have belongs to God!”  
 “I am not my own, I’m bought with a price,” *1Cor 6:19,20*.  
 “My body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.”  
 “I give up ownership of all I have to God.”  
 “I am a steward for God to use my time, treasure, and talent for His glory,” *1Cor 10:31, Col 3:17, see No135*.  
 “I present my body as a living sacrifice to God,” *Rom 12:1*.
20. Practise a **giving lifestyle**, *Mal 3:8-11, Lk 6:38, Gal 6:6-8, 1Tim 6:9,10,17, Mat 6:33, Pro 11:24, 2Cor 9:6,7*.
21. **Lastly the pleasures of life.** Do not allow them to distract you from God’s Word.
22. We need rest, relaxation and recreation.
23. But don’t let entertainment, hobbies, sport, travel, excitement, fishing, TV, video, work, reading, games, amusements, gardening rule your life.
24. Discipline your life, *1Cor 9:27*, and your mind, *Col 3:2*, your words, *Ps 19:14*, and your deeds, *Col 3:17*, through the strength of the Holy Spirit, *Phil 2:13GNB*, to keep your priority in God’s will and Word for your life.