

The condition of our hearts – the distracted heart

One morning a farmer told his wife that he was going out to pluck the ripe fruit from his field.

He got off to an early start so he could warm up the truck. He needed more petrol, so he went to the store to get it. On the way to his truck he noticed the pigs weren't fed. So he proceeded to the corn crib, where he found some sacks of feed. Beside the sacks were potatoes that were sprouting. Then when he started for the potato pit, he passed the wood pile and remembered that his wife wanted wood in the house. As he picked up a few sticks, an ailing chicken passed by. He dropped the wood and picked up the chicken.

When noon arrived, the frustrated farmer had not even gotten to the truck, let alone to the field. By now, it was very hot. Some ripe fruit have dropped.

Have you ever intended to do something you knew was very important, but found yourself in a similar situation - distracted by many other seemingly important tasks, which kept you from accomplishing your main objective?

Matthew 13: 1 – 9; 18 – 23

1) Good soil grows weeds and thorns too

- The sower sowed seeds in good soil that was full of weeds and thorns.
- How do we know that it was good soil?
 - The weeds and thorns grew there, and flourished.
 - The seed that the farmer sowed took root and grew. It did not lie on the surface as with the seed on the hard ground that was snatched up by the birds. Nor was rocky ground where the roots were only shallow and superficial, that withered and died in the heat of the sun.
 - This seed took roots and grew, but so did the thorns.
- The deceit of thinking that the good seed would outgrow the thorns. Spurgeon puts it this way:
 - See how happy he is when in a month or two he visits the spot. The seed has sprung up. True, there's a suspicious little plant down there of about the same size as the wheat. "Oh!" he thinks, "that's not much, the corn will out-grow that. When it is stronger it will choke these few thistles that have unfortunately mixed with it." Ay, Mr. Husbandman, you do not understand the force of evil, or you would not thus dream! He comes again, and the seed has grown, there is even the corn in the ear; but the thistles, the thorns, and the briars have become intertwined with one another, and the poor wheat can hardly get a ray of sunshine. It is so choked with thorns every way, that it looks quite yellow: the plant is starved. Still it perseveres in growing, and it does seem as if it would bring forth a little fruit. Alas, it never comes to anything.
- Although we may be diligent in receiving the seed of the Word of God on a regular basis either through reading it or listening to it being preached, we need to heed what else is being planted in our hearts and minds.
- We are constantly being bombarded with worldly ideas and philosophies.
 - Almost every movie and series has included homosexuality in it.
 - Eastern philosophies have become prominent with even Christians quoting Buddha and others.
 - Right has become wrong and wrong has become right.
 - Criminals are made to be the heroes and the good are made to be criminals.
- When the seeds of thorns take root in our hearts and minds, they pave the way for the distractions in our lives.

2) The distractions of life

- The distracted Christian can also be referred to as the divided Christian with their loyalties divided between Christ and the world.
- This is something that Paul was concerned about when he wrote:
 - 2 Corinthians 11: 2 – 3 I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

- However, instead have maintaining that sincere and pure devotion to Christ our minds are so often led astray, distracted, by other things.
 - The serpent, the devil, certainly is cunning because often the things that distract us aren't always sinful, but merely keep us from our devotion to Christ.
 - A good movie or book may be perfectly morally good, but could keep us away from the Word and prayer.
- The distractions that Jesus directly pointed to were:
 - The worries of this life
 - The deceitfulness of wealth.
- Worrying about the things of this life
 - It is the lure of the things of this life that distract us from Christ.
 - These may be good or bad.
 - When we are so concerned about other things, we don't have time for Christ and his kingdom.
 - Worrying is a sign of a lack of faith that God will take care of us and our needs. We are trying to figure out life on our own without him, which dishonours him.
 - Didn't Jesus tell us not to worry about what we're going to eat or wear because our Father will take care of us? Faith pleases God.
- The deceitfulness of wealth
 - The pursuit of wealth is a major distraction from the pursuit of the kingdom.
 - Jesus said that it would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. (Mark 10: 25)
 - There are rich people who will enter the kingdom of God because they have submitted their wealth to the lordship of Christ, but in general rich people don't see their need for God. They have become self-sufficient and absorbed in their wealth.
 - Of course, when we talk about the deceitfulness of wealth we automatically think of the rich, whereas the poor can be equally side-tracked in their pursuits to a better life that they too can miss the kingdom of God.
- We all face distractions and lures away from the pursuit of the kingdom on a daily basis.
 - A busy day ahead would keep us from praying.
 - I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer. **Martin Luther**
 - Cellphones and social media are a present-day distraction
 - Our spiritual condition is one of having spiritual ADD. We are more easily distracted from the important issues of our lives moment by moment. The nature of digital communication is that we are endlessly distracted. (Bruce Hindmarsh)

3) The unfruitful Christian

- The interesting thing is that Jesus didn't say that the distracted Christian isn't saved, but isn't fruitful.
- He doesn't accomplish anything of significance in the kingdom of God.
- We cannot focus on two things at the same time, especially if one is in front of us and the other behind us.
- Not only are our hearts, but our time is divided.
- We will always give our time to what we have determined are our priorities. The time that is left over is given to other things.
 - How much time do we give to things of the kingdom – prayer, worship, Bible study, being a witness for Christ, etc.?
 - How much time do we give to other things such as social media, socialising with friends, working overtime, etc.?
- Jesus said that a divided kingdom cannot stand
- If our lives are being strangled by the things of the world rendering us unfruitful then we need to ask ourselves what we need to change to become fruitful in the Kingdom of God.
 - That's not only fruitful in accomplishment, but primarily fruitful in character becoming more Christlike.
- Jesus didn't make fruitfulness an optional extra.
 - John 15: 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit--fruit that will last--and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.