

Learning to Listen to God Jn 10:27

The Distracted hearers. Mt. 13:7, 22

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, Oct 17th

Mt. 13:3 *“He spake many things unto them in parables...”*

The word Parable comes from *parabole* which literally means: “to cast near” (where someone can “grasp” it.) This first parable in Mt. 13 is critical because Jesus interpreted each point for us and because it reveals the importance of cultivating a heart that’s receptive and responsive to God. Jesus revealed that some are easily Deceived because of a closed heart and mind. (Mt 13:4,19) Still others are easily Disappointed because of a shallow or superficial heart when it comes to the things of God. The third “heart condition” Jesus revealed in this amazing story involves:

The Distracted hearer with a preoccupied (cluttered) mind and heart. Vs 7,22.

1. A Preoccupied Mind Is un-Receptive To God, Because it’s Too Receptive of Other “Things”.

A. There’s limited room and nutrition (time and energy) in the soil of our souls.

1) The greater the “clutter” (demands and interests) in our lives, the less time/energy we have for anything NEW.

a) These existing priorities (*weeds*) compete and so deplete the soil (soul) nutrients!

b) The weeds block the sun (son) light and so affect the process for growth/fruit. (photosynthesis)

2) **This requires us to prioritize.** Luke 14:25-35 Eph 5:16-17; James 4:14; Psalm 90:12

B. The longer we wait to commit to God, the more weeds (clutter) fill our lives.

1) The deeper their roots grow.

2) The stronger (more dominant) the weeds become.

3) The more they deplete the soil of available nutrients. (Energy/Resources)

4) The more embedded they become in our lives.

Lk 8:14 *“choked with cares, riches, pleasures...”* *synpigno*: to drown, crowd, or strangle completely!

Eccl. 12:1 *“Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not...”*

2. A Preoccupied heart is unproductive (for God.)

A. Notice the Nature (*Identity*) of the weeds. Mt. 13:22; Mk 4:19

1) Cares (Worries) *mer'imna* literally means distraction. From *meridzo* (to pull apart)

By contrast “Peace” *eiro*: means “to join!”

Lk 10:41,42 *“Martha, Martha, thou art careful (miramnao: distracted) and troubled (tyrbaz’ō: crowded) about many things. But one thing is needful: (chreia: critical) Mary hath chosen that good part...”*

2) “Deceitfulness (apat’ē: delusion) of riches.” (*ploutos*: money, possessions, abundance)

Lk 12:15 *“Beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things ...”*

1 Tim. 6:9 *“they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts,*

Which drown men in destruction and perdition” *Apōleia*: ruin, waste (see Phil. 3:18,19)

Luke 12:20,21 *“Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”*

3) “the lusts (epithymi’a: longing, to set your heart upon) of other things entering in” Mk 4:19

Pr 4:23 *“Keep (nāšar: guard) thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”* (1 Jn 2:15,26)

B. Notice the effect of the weeds. Mt 13:7, 22 *“the thorns sprung up, and choked them:”* *“thorns and thistles”* (Gen. 3:18) were the result of sin.

1) Weeds of worldliness compete with God’s seed. Vs 22 Jesus warned *“no man can serve two masters...”* (Mt 6:24) Here we have the result of trying. (James 1:8)

- a) Jesus **created** us for God's specific purposes. *Rev 4:11 "thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure (thel'ēma: purposes) they are created."*
- b) Jesus **called** us for these purposes (fruit) Jn 15:16
"I have chosen you, ... that ye should bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain..."
- c) Pursuing These (God's) purposes produce:
- (1) **Peace** (Jer. 29:11; Jn 14:27; 20:21)
 - (2) **Partnership**. (Ex. 3:12; Mt. 11:28,29; 1 Cor. 3:9)
 - (3) **Power** and Provision (Phil. 4:13,19; 2 Cor. 12:9) (see also Ps. 16:11; Jer. 29:11)

Conclusion: It takes no skill or effort to grow weeds!

1. Weeds are a sign of **neglect!** Pr 24:30-31 *"I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; And it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof..."*
When you "neglect" your spiritual life, these worldly weeds will naturally grow!
2. Fruitless branches act as weeds! John 15:1-4
 - a) Take nutrients from productive branches.
 - b) Block sunshine from productive Branches.

Application: Does God keep getting a busy signal when he calls you?

1) Are you willing to ask God to give you a spiritual "Heart/Brain" Scan?

Ps 139:23-24 *"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."*

Most of us are still trying to "lead" ourselves in a way that's "temporary"! (Pr. 14:12; 16:25)

2) What would such a scan indicate about you?

If you could have a spiritual "heart scan", which would it indicate about you? Do you have:

- A deceived (Closed) Heart/mind? *Don't really 'think much' about God!?!*
- A disappointed (Superficial) Heart/mind? *No deep roots/commitments?*
- A distracted (Cluttered) Heart/mind? *Distraction leads to eventual destruction!*
- Or A Disciplined (Receptive, Responsive) Heart?

3) If you have a distracted heart, What "weeds" are choking your spiritual life?

- Cares of this world? Phil. 4:6-10 *"be careful for nothing but in everything by prayer..."*
- Deceitfulness of Riches? 1 Tim. 6:6-11 *"Godliness with contentment is great gain..."*
- Lusts of other things? Phil. 3:17-20 *"(For many walk, ... that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind (phroneō: focus, regard, value) earthly things.)"*

Since we're *"laborers together with God, ye are God's husbandry"* (1 Cor 3:9) Are you willing to ask Him to help you Identify and Remove the weeds of worldliness in your life?

*"Things upon the mantle, things on every shelf; Things that others gave me, things I gave myself,
Things I've stored in boxes, don't mean much anymore, Old magazines and memories behind the attic door.
Things on hooks and hangers, things on ropes and rings, Things I guard that blind me, to the pettiness of things.
Am I like the rich young ruler: ruled by all I own? If Jesus came and asked me, could I leave them all alone?
Oh Lord, I look to heaven beyond the veil of time, To gain eternal insight that nothing's really mine!*

*And to only ask for daily bread and all contentment brings
To find freedom as your servant in the midst of all these things.
For discarded in the junk yards, rusting in the rain, Lie things that took the finest years of lifetimes to obtain.
And whistling through these tombstones the hollow breezes sing*

*The song of dreams surrendered to the tyranny of things! Scott Wesley Brown
"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith"*

Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22