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 cares\(^1\) 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).

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 seems 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).

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