



SAVED TO SERVE

Pastor Andrew Henriques

www.prophecyagain.com

THE CONDITION OF GOD'S REMNANT CHURCH THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER, PART 5

1. In this Sabbath School Lesson, we will continue our study looking at the 'Parable of the Sower' and focus on the thorny-ground hearers. Let us read Mark 4:18, 19 and Luke 8:14.
2. What do the "thorns" represent in our lives?
 - a) Proverbs 24:30-34

Answer: _____

"Grace can thrive only in the heart that is being constantly prepared for the precious seeds of truth. **The thorns of sin will grow in any soil; they need no cultivation; but grace must be carefully cultivated. The briars and thorns are always ready to spring up, and the work of purification must advance continually.** If the heart is not kept under the control of God, if the Holy Spirit does not work unceasingly to refine and ennoble the character, the old habits will reveal themselves in the life. Men may profess to believe the gospel; but unless they are sanctified by the gospel their profession is of no avail. **If they do not gain the victory over sin, then sin is gaining the victory over them. The thorns that have been cut off but not uprooted grow apace, until the soul is overspread with them.**" {COL 50.4}

- b) Matthew 6:31, 33, 34

Answer: _____

"And the lusts of other things." **These are not necessarily things sinful in themselves, but something that is made first instead of the kingdom of God. Whatever attracts the mind from God, whatever draws the affections away from Christ, is an enemy to the soul.**" {COL 53.2}

3. **Note:** The Bible breaks down the thorns into four categories: *the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, the pleasures of this life and the lust of other things.* Let us analyze each of these categories so that we may identify any thorns in our lives.
4. What do the cares of this world look like? See Matthew 6:25-34 and Luke 10:38-42

Answer: _____

"...We are to labor that we may impart to him who needs. **Christians must work, they must engage in business, and they can do this without committing sin. But many become so absorbed in business that they have no time for prayer, no time for the study of the Bible, no time to seek and serve God. At times the longings of the soul go out for holiness and heaven; but there is no time to turn aside from the din of the world to listen to the majestic and authoritative utterances of the Spirit of God.** The things of eternity are made subordinate, the things of the world supreme. It is impossible for the seed of the word to bring forth fruit; for the life of the soul is given to nourish the thorns of worldliness." {COL 51.3}

"And many who are working with a very different purpose, fall into a like error. They are working for others' good; their duties are pressing, their responsibilities are many, and they allow their labor to crowd out devotion. Communion with God through prayer and a study of His word is neglected. They forget that Christ has said, "Without Me ye can do nothing." John 15:5. They walk apart from Christ, their life is not pervaded by His grace, and the characteristics of self are revealed. Their service is marred by desire for supremacy, and the harsh, unlovely traits of the unsubdued heart. Here is one of the chief secrets of failure in Christian work. This is why its results are often so meager." {COL 52.1}

5. What do the deceitfulness of riches look like? 1 Timothy 6:6-10

Answer: _____

6. What prophet fell because of his desire for riches? Numbers 22:6-8, 18-20

Answer: _____

“Balaam “loved the wages of unrighteousness.” 2 Peter 2:15. The sin of covetousness, which God declares to be idolatry, had made him a timeserver, and through this one fault Satan gained entire control of him. It was this that caused his ruin. The tempter is ever presenting worldly gain and honor to entice men from the service of God. He tells them it is their overconscientiousness that keeps them from prosperity. Thus many are induced to venture out of the path of strict integrity. One wrong step makes the next easier, and they become more and more presumptuous. They will do and dare most terrible things when once they have given themselves to the control of avarice and a desire for power. Many flatter themselves that they can depart from strict integrity for a time, for the sake of some worldly advantage, and that having gained their object, they can change their course when they please. Such are entangling themselves in the snare of Satan, and it is seldom that they escape.” {PP 439.5}

7. What is Paul’s warning to us concerning the pleasures and lusts of this world? 1 Peter 2:11

Answer: _____

“And pleasures of this life.” There is danger in amusement that is sought merely for self-gratification. All habits of indulgence that weaken the physical powers, that becloud the mind, or that benumb the spiritual perceptions, are “fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.” 1 Peter 2:11. {COL 53.1}

8. What are some specific pleasures that are leading many youth not to be steadfast Christians? Galatians 5:20

Answer: _____

“Many parents seek to promote the happiness of their children by gratifying their love of amusement. They allow them to engage in sports, and to attend parties of pleasure, and provide them with money to use freely in display and self-gratification. The more the desire for pleasure is indulged, the stronger it becomes. The interest of these youth is more and more absorbed in amusement, until they come to look upon it as the great object of life. They form habits of idleness and self-indulgence that make it almost impossible for them ever to become steadfast Christians.” {COL 54.1}

9. Sadly, many churches cultivate thorns in the hearts of their members. How do they do this? Answer: See quotation

“Even the church, which should be the pillar and ground of the truth, is found encouraging the selfish love of pleasure. When money is to be raised for religious purposes, to what means do many churches resort? To bazaars, suppers, fancy fairs, even to lotteries, and like devices. Often the place set apart for God’s worship is desecrated by feasting and drinking, buying, selling, and merrymaking. Respect for the house of God and reverence for His worship are lessened in the minds of the youth. The barriers of self-restraint are weakened. Selfishness, appetite, the love of display, are appealed to, and they strengthen as they are indulged.” {COL 54.2}

10. What should we be taught about our conduct in the house of God? 1 Timothy 3:15

Answer: _____

11. We are counseled in scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy to get out of the cities. How do the cities cause many young people to produce thorns instead of fruit? Ezekiel 16:49; Romans 9:29

Answer: _____

“...The cities of today are fast becoming like Sodom and Gomorrah. The many holidays encourage idleness. The exciting sports—theatergoing, horse racing, gambling, liquor-drinking, and reveling—stimulate every passion to intense activity. The youth are swept away by the popular current. Those who learn to love amusement for its own sake open the door to a flood of temptations.” {COL 54.3}

12. While we are playing games with sin, who is playing the game of life for our souls? Revelation 12:12; John 10:10

Answer: _____

“Cares, riches, pleasures, all are used by Satan in playing the game of life for the human soul.” {COL 55.2}

“...The only satisfaction Satan takes in playing the game of life for the souls of men is the satisfaction he takes in hurting the heart of Christ.” {RH March 31, 1896, par. 7}

13. Note: Let us now transition to the hope for the thorny-ground hearers.

14. What sprung up after sin entered the world, and why did God permit this? Genesis 3:17-19

Answer: _____

“...From that time the race would be afflicted by Satan’s temptations. Instead of the happy labor heretofore appointed them, anxiety and toil were to be their lot. They would be subject to disappointment, grief, and pain, and finally to death.” {PP 59.3}

“And the life of toil and care which was henceforth to be man’s lot was appointed in love. It was a discipline rendered needful by his sin, to place a check upon the indulgence of appetite and passion, to develop habits of self-control. It was a part of God’s great plan of man’s recovery from the ruin and degradation of sin.” {PP 60.1}

15. To whom must we look to get victory over the thorny ground? John 19:1-3; Hebrews 12:2, 3; 1 Peter 5:4

Answer: _____

“Jesus was taken, faint with weariness and covered with wounds, and scourged in the sight of the multitude. “And the soldiers led Him away into the hall, called Praetorium, and they call together the whole band. And they clothed Him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about His head, and began to salute Him, Hail, King of the Jews! And they ... did spit upon Him, and bowing their knees worshiped Him.” **Occasionally some wicked hand snatched the reed that had been placed in His hand, and struck the crown upon His brow, forcing the thorns into His temples, and sending the blood trickling down His face and beard.**” {DA 734.1}

“Satan led the cruel mob in its abuse of the Saviour. It was his purpose to provoke Him to retaliation if possible, or to drive Him to perform a miracle to release Himself, and thus break up the plan of salvation. **One stain upon His human life, one failure of His humanity to endure the terrible test, and the Lamb of God would have been an imperfect offering, and the redemption of man a failure. But He who by a command could bring the heavenly host to His aid—He who could have driven that mob in terror from His sight by the flashing forth of His divine majesty—submitted with perfect calmness to the coarsest insult and outrage.**” {DA 734.3}