



## SAVED TO SERVE

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### THE CONDITION OF GOD'S REMNANT CHURCH THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER, PART 6

1. In this Sabbath School Lesson, we will continue addressing the thorny-ground hearers by analyzing the life of the apostle Paul and Judas Iscariot.

2. Read 2 Corinthians 12:7, 8. What was given to Paul so that he would not be exalted above measure?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Note:** Based on Paul's experience, physical ailments are thorns that can either cause someone to see their need of Christ or cause them to turn away from Jesus. Another application of the thorn in Paul's flesh is the war in our hearts against sin.

4. How does Paul describe the battle between 'the will' and 'the desires of the flesh'? Romans 7:18-20; 22, 23

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

**"... 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}

5. What does Jesus say concerning the spirit and the flesh? Matthew 26:41

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

6. **Note:** To better understand the thorny-ground hearers, we have given them the alias, *The Judas*'. Let us now examine the life of Judas in the context of our study.

7. What was Judas' aim in trying to become a disciple of Jesus? Matthew 8:19, 20

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

**"While Jesus was preparing the disciples for their ordination, one who had not been summoned urged his presence among them. It was Judas Iscariot, a man who professed to be a follower of Christ. He now came forward, soliciting a place in this inner circle of disciples.** With great earnestness and apparent sincerity he declared, "Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." Jesus neither repulsed nor welcomed him, but uttered only the mournful words: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." Matthew 8:19, 20. **Judas believed Jesus to be the Messiah; and by joining the apostles, he hoped to secure a high position in the new kingdom. This hope Jesus designed to cut off by the statement of His poverty.**" {DA 293.2}

8. Many people believe that Judas was destined to betray Christ and was therefore always in a lost condition. Was Judas always unconverted? Matthew 10:1, 4, 8; 12:26

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Read John 12:3-8. How is Judas described, and what was his downfall?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

**"The history of Judas is written for our learning.** He was a betrayer of sacred trusts. He had an opportunity to become converted, heart and soul, to Christ. The Saviour bore long with his perversity and defects of character. He gave no personal rebuke; he dealt with him by revealing principles of righteousness. But this was not enough. Before he left his disciples, he desired them to know the true character of Judas, and he reprovved him for his covetousness in rebuking Mary for her use of the ointment." {RH May 24, 1898, par. 8}

**"John and Judas are representatives of those who profess to be Christ's followers. Both these disciples had the same opportunities to study and follow the divine Pattern.** Both were closely associated with Jesus and were privileged to listen to His teaching. Each possessed serious defects of character; and each had access to the divine grace that transforms character. **But while one in humility was learning of Jesus, the other revealed that he was not a doer of the word, but a**

**hearer only. One, daily dying to self and overcoming sin, was sanctified through the truth; the other, resisting the transforming power of grace and indulging selfish desires, was brought into bondage to Satan."** {AA 558.1}

10. **Note:** Mark 14:1-11 describes the same scene where Jesus rebukes Judas for chastising Mary. Verses 10 and 11 show us that this was the catalyst for Judas to go and betray Jesus. Instead of examining himself and correcting his character defects, he chose to point the finger at someone else and thus he began to turn his back on Christ and His truth.

11. The promptings of the Holy Spirit are "thorns" that Jesus uses in order to get our attention so that we may see our need and surrender all to Him. What did Jesus say to Saul, who became Paul? Acts 9:4, 5

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

12. **Note:** Saul, who became Paul, started off as a persecutor of Jesus Christ. When Jesus pricked him with reproof, he saw his need and allowed the grace of God to be cultivated in the soil of his heart and as a result he obtained victory over his sins. Judas, however, started off with Christ, but failed to continually cultivate grace and thus became the most notorious persecutor of Jesus. Judas' life is left on record for all of us to examine ourselves.

13. As Paul struggled with the thorn(s) in his flesh, what promise did Christ give to Paul, which we can also claim today? 2 Corinthians 12:9, 10

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

14. What is grace? 2 Corinthians 9:8; Titus 2:11, 12

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

15. Once we receive the grace of God, what must we do to be consistent Christians and not allow the thorns of sin to grow in our lives? 1 Corinthians 9:27; 15:31

**"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}