

The Parable of the Sower

by David Wilkerson

David Wilkerson's sermon on the Parable of the Sower emphasizes the different responses to God's Word and the necessity of a receptive heart for spiritual growth.

Duration: 1:01:10

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Mark 4:15-16, 2 Corinthians 11:2-4

Topics: "Biblical Obedience", "Spiritual Hunger"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the parable of the sower and how people respond to the word of God. He describes four classes of hearers, including four types of churches and pastors. The preacher emphasizes the importance of hunger and thirst for the word of God, stating that only a certain kind of people will be able to receive the preaching. He also expresses his confusion and frustration with Christians who do not prioritize prayer and seek God's guidance.

Transcript

The parable of the sower. We're going to talk about how you respond to the Word of God. We're going to talk about four types of churches.

We're going to find out which kind of church you belong to. You may not belong to this church. You may not fit in this church.

We're going to find out. Now, we're not going to chase you away, but I'm afraid the Word's going to chase you away if you don't fit. We're going to preach the kind of Word here that only suits a certain kind of people.

I mean a hungry people, a thirsty people. If you're not hungry, you're not thirsty. I don't know, you're going to make it halfway through my message.

I'm going to lose you. Mark, and I'm not being facetious, I mean it with all my heart. Mark, the fourth chapter.

Let's begin with the third verse, Jesus speaking. Well, let's start second verse. Let's go to the first verse.

Mark 4. And he began to teach by the seaside. There was gathered unto him, look at this, a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship and sat in the sea. Of course, he's in a boat.

And the whole multitude was by the sea on the land. And he taught them many things by parables and said unto them in his doctrine. I hear people say, I don't believe in doctrine.

I don't want to hear anything about doctrine. Well, it says in King James, he taught them his doctrine. Harken, behold, there went out a sower to sow, and it came to pass as he sowed, some fell by the wayside.

And the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. And some fell on stony ground where it had not much earth, and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. And when the sun was up, it was scorched, and because it had no root, it withered away.

And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. And other fell on good ground and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased and brought forth some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred. And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Now, I just, look at me please. I have just now described you four churches, four classes of people. We're going to discuss them tonight.

Jesus gives this parable to a great multitude gathered. Now, I want you to know that Jesus himself said that they didn't understand what he was saying. Because they came to see the miracles.

They came for the signs and the wonders, and they came for the loaves and the fishes. You see, the preaching was an intrusion to these people. It was something just packed on, something they endured.

Jesus makes it very clear, says he taught them many things by parables. But he also said that they did not understand. If you look at verse 11 and 12, you'll see it.

It's verse 11, same chapter. And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom, speaking to the disciples. But unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables.

That seeing they may see, and not perceive. And hearing they may hear, and not understand. Lest at any time they should be converted, their sins should be forgiven them.

Alright, here's the tragedy. These people, multitudes. He looks out over this multitude.

And he knows that they've already, they're so bound by their tradition. They're not going to be moved. Jesus knows it.

The prophet Isaiah foretold it. He said these people are so bound by their traditions. In other words, today it's denominationalism.

They're so bound by their either somebody of God denominationalism. Their Baptist denominationalism. And they think they know it all.

They have it all. And Jesus knows they're not going to hear. They're just waiting for the healing line.

They're waiting for the message, the sermon to get over. It's like the woman that came to me. And she goes to one of these fun churches.

You know, fun. It's fun to go. There's no preaching.

In fact, I asked her, what is there about that church that's attracting so many down there? She said, oh, it's wonderful. An hour and a half and we sing and shout and praise the Lord. And only ten minutes of preaching.

It's wonderful. You know, they tack on the sermon. It's an intrusion.

And you see, Jesus knew this was an intrusion. They're just waiting. They've come to see demons cast out.

They want to see the bodies wriggling on the ground. They want to hear the demons cry out. Because they are feeding their emotions.

They're not there to hear the truth. And Jesus even to his own disciples said, I want you to pray for an understanding. And if you're not sitting here tonight praying that God will help you understand what I'm saying tonight, you may not understand it.

Pray for an understanding, Jesus said, that you may understand it. Now, the great majority of God's people today really do not want to hear strong preaching. They really get bored.

You know, it's an amazing thing. I watch Brother Phillips preach. And Brother Phillips is a Bible teacher.

And if you don't have your Bible, you soon get lost. But you know, there are people that are coming to our meetings, and I watch it, and I can almost tell what church they're from. I mean, what denominational background they are.

They're so used to being spoon fed. Have a bottle put in their mouth. They don't have to open their Bibles.

Most churches, you don't even need to take your Bible, because a brother will take a text, and I'm not putting preachers down. I went to church like that. In fact, I used to be that kind of a preacher.

I didn't even take my Bible to the pulpit. I took my sermon notes. I didn't even need my Bible, because all I needed was a text.

And I would take that text, and people would just sit there, and a lot of them would want to just doze off. And then when I got red hot, they'd wake up. Or if I shouted loud enough, they'd wake up.

But I watched Brother Phillips preach, and I saw it this morning. Some that are not used, they're not hungry, they're not thirsting after the Word of God. They're so used to running to seminar and convention, and they're so used to wanting to see the people falling out.

You know, down. Being knocked out. Now, I'm not putting that down.

You know, Jesus said, stand on your feet. Stand up! I was in a meeting, and the evangelist wanted to pray for me. And I said, okay.

And he wanted to knock me down. I wouldn't go, so his ass was pulling my coat down. Trying to pull me down.

Now, don't laugh at that, folks. I think that in that church became a show. And God hates it.

God despises it when it's a show. I believe God can knock you down. I've been knocked out many times by the Holy Ghost.

But I don't want to see a show. These people gathered the multitude, and Jesus is out on the boat. He's teaching this multitude.

He's teaching them parables, because they're not even understanding. They have closed their minds. Nothing He says is going to move them or change them.

And so, when He gets along with His disciples, they say, Master, teach us. Show us. So, He said, it's up to you.

You who love the Word. You who want to know. I'll show you these mysteries.

And I tell you, if you have a hunger and a thirst for God's Word, it won't be long until you start learning the things that you've never learned in your life. God will begin to open your eyes and your ears. And He'll give you a hearing ear.

I heard someone say recently, Boy, we had a great meeting. The Holy Ghost came down. We had no preaching.

It was wonderful. Early Pentecost, that was called a great meeting. I believe God can do that.

He did it in the house of Cornelius. When Peter was halfway through his message, God interrupted him and sent the Holy Ghost. And they began to speak with tongues and began to praise the Lord right in the middle of it.

But I watch people when Brother Phillips preaches so often, how bored they are. Now, not those who love the Word. Those who love the Word, I listen to them.

They say, Oh, glory. Hallelujah. I heard, I think it was Kenny Rogers behind me this morning said, Wow.

Or somebody back there said, Wow. The Word was hitting. There was a love.

There was a thirst. There was a hunger. And God was opening the Word.

But you see, others sit there absolutely bored. And I heard someone say about Brother Phillips. He said, I don't know if I can handle that.

You have to concentrate too much. You have to think. Yes, Brother, Sister, when you come to Town Square Church, you're going to concentrate on the Word.

You're going to think. Got them thinking, Brother Bob. But you see, then they run off to their comfortable church where they can just sit back and be exhorted.

Now, these multitudes. Okay. I get to thundering here and shouting.

My wife keeps saying, David, quit yelling so loud. You know, a lot of people go to church. All they want is action.

I could have action. They can't sit and just listen to the Word. They can't sit silently in the presence of the Lord.

Let the Word come forth in its gentleness or in its thunder. They have to have something moving all the time. Give me action.

Now, Jesus describes here four classes of hearers. Now, I believe there are four kinds of people. In fact, it includes four kinds of pastors.

Now, you see, denominations don't bother God. That's not the thing. It's the type of hearing that bothers God.

Now, I don't belong to a denomination anymore. Recently, I left a denomination that I was in because this is an independent church. It's interdenominational.

I just felt that I wanted to be free of all denominational ties. And yet, I don't believe that's the thing that bothers God as much as the kind of hearing that goes on inside that particular church. Every individual church.

We have in this parable now the wayside church. We've got the metropolitan stony church. And we've got the church of choking thorns.

And we've got the church of pure hearts. And we're going to find out which one you belong to because all four of these churches are in full operation in New York City. I'll tell you what.

I'll tell you something now. You're going to look and you're going to run from church to church until you settle in to the church that best suits your hearing. You understand what I'm saying? You got me doing that, Bob.

Do you understand what I'm saying? We have people that are runners. This is marathon day. We've got marathon Christians running all over New York looking for a church to land in.

And I tell you, you're going to look and look and look until you hear a certain sound. And when you hear it, you'll come back. We're going to talk first of all about the wayside church.

Mark 4 verse 15. Let's go to verse 15. Verse 14 says the sower went forth to sow the word of God.

Jesus is explaining this parable now. He's getting down to basics. These are they by the wayside.

This is the wayside church and the wayside people. When they heard, when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. Now look at me please.

You think of it for just a moment. Even now, while I stand here delivering the holy word of God under his unction and his anointing, Satan is here in this building in the hearts of some. And every word that I speak tonight is going to have no effect because he's there.

Every word that is received is taken immediately by Satan. It's taken away. So that there's no hearing, nothing that I say is going to affect you, nothing that I say is going to move you, because the devil has been given place in your heart and he takes it, and he doesn't care if you go to church every night.

You can go to any convention, you can go to any seminar, you can listen to all the tapes you want, you can listen to Jimmy Swagger, you can listen to anybody, because he knows that he's going to take it as soon as it hits the ear. That's what the Bible says. Read it again.

These are they by the wayside. When the word is sown, when they hear the word, in other words, they've heard, Satan comes in immediately and he takes away the word that was sown in their heart. The devil himself, the thief who comes to steal and to kill, is robbing them of the truth.

Now according to the Bible, Ananias and Sapphira, remember, came and lied to Peter, and Peter turned to them and he asked this question. Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Ghost and keep back part of the price? Do you know that I'm convinced that Ananias and Sapphira were in the upper room, they were baptized with the Holy Spirit. I believe that they heard the preaching of Peter and he said, this is that.

They saw the miracles, they were a part of it, but they were not really hearing. They had given Satan a place. And you know what that is? They were not willing to pay the full price.

They held back part of the price. They were not willing to go all the way. There are some of you sitting here tonight, you've gone so far with the Lord, but you've been holding back part of the price.

You will not lay down that final thing that God's put his finger on. And how many times he comes time and time again and saying, lay it down, lay it down. And if you play with it, if you toy with it, you leave room.

The devil sees that unwillingness to depart with it or walk away from it. He sees you lusting after it, holding on to it. And this is an open invitation for the devil to come into your very heart.

And you can't get away from it. It says, why have you let Satan enter into you? You let him enter into you. He can't do it to a Christian who's walking in the fullness of Jesus Christ under the blood of Christ.

I don't believe that demons possess those. Demons cannot possess those that are walking in the righteousness of Christ, covered by the precious blood. I want to tell you what.

If God won't cross the bloodline, how's he going to let a demon cross it? He said, when I see the blood, I'll pass over you. God said that. You mean to tell me he's going to let a demon cross it when he won't cross it? No, so not here at Times Square.

I do believe that there are Christians who the demon possess, but they are wayside Christians. They are those who have been holding back part of the price. They've allowed Satan to enter in.

They've given him a place and he's come in. And so they come and they sit and they'll even smile and they hear it. When I used to pastor years ago, there would be people sitting in my church for five, six years, and there was nothing I could preach.

Nothing. There would be alcoholics come in and run to the altar. There would be people that had never been saved come in, immediately hear the word and fall on their face.

And those others that sat there, year after year after year, getting harder and harder and harder. Nothing I preached could move them. Because the enemy was stealing everything I preached.

It didn't even get to the heart. Judas. Satan entered his heart, and when Jesus is speaking Christ, and when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot.

And after the sop, Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, What thou doest, do it quickly. And he went out immediately.

This man who'd cast out devils and healed the sick. The Lord is saying, now I don't even know you. You worker of iniquity.

He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. He that came eating my bread. Think of that.

Those who come week after week. Sitting eating the bread of God. Hearing the word of the Lord is the bread of life.

They hear it and they hear it. And yet they lift up their heel against the Lord in spite of sitting there. These are the wayside hearers.

They sat at the Lord's table. And I want you to know that I believe that there are Judas shepherds. Did you hear it? There are men of God that used to walk in righteousness.

That had such a holy ministry. And that's why you were attracted to them in the first place. You went there because there was a need in your life being met.

But somewhere along the line, sin was allowed to enter the heart. And the man is not what he used to be. And I don't have anyone in mind in particular.

But I hear it from people all over the United States. They used to write to us saying, Brother Wilkerson, something's happened in my church. Something's going wrong.

I sense something wrong. I can discern it. I don't know what it is, but I feel it.

Often they say it's something evil. It's something wicked. The word that's coming forth is not the true word of the Lord.

It's a Judas message. It's a Judas shepherd. He that sat at my table eating my bread has lifted his heel against me.

I want you to go to 2 Thessalonians. I want to enlarge on this for just a moment. 2 Thessalonians.

If you're in Mark, go right. 2 Thessalonians, the second chapter. Do you understand that there are two gospels being preached today? Well, there are many gospels, but one that pretends to be the true gospel.

Do you know that there are two Jesuses being preached also? There's another Christ, another gospel, another doctrine. Chapter 2, verse 9. And even him who's coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders. You know that Satan can put on signs and wonders? And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved.

Do you have a love for the truth tonight? That's what Bob was preaching about this morning, and I'm enlarging on that. The Holy Spirit's enlarging on that. That you need to have a capacity for the truth.

A love for the truth. You can't understand truth until you want to love it. Receive it.

Verse 11, for this cause God shall send them strong delusion. Who? Doesn't say the devil's going to send it. Who's going to send it? God shall send them strong delusion.

That means error. That they should believe a lie. That they all might be damned to believe not the truth.

But had pleasure in unrighteousness. They wouldn't let go of their sins. They wouldn't let go.

Would you look this way for just a moment? How much discernment do you have right now? If you've got sin in your life and you don't want to lay it down, you're going to end up in a church where there's a wayside Judas preacher in the pulpit, and he's going to give you a message that's going to make you feel comfortable in your sin because he's playing with his own sin. He's going to take you all through the Bible and tell you about all the failures of all the men of God, and especially David and Samson. And he's going to tell you all about the terrible things these men did.

And he's going to say, see, they were men of God. You're going to do the same thing. And you're going to hear a man standing in the pulpit talking about how much he loves you.

He'll cry over you. He'll weep over you. And I'm not trying to get you to join this church.

You can't join this church. We don't even have a membership. And I'm not putting down preachers.

But I'm telling you, I've seen wayside churches where the whole church is that way. People who despise the truth, people who won't accept reproof, people who are so addicted to their sins they don't want to let them go, and they want to go to church and feel good about themselves. And so they're listening to lies.

Jesus warned in Revelation about a synagogue of Satan, a church of Satan. And he's speaking to those who claim to be following his own name, and he called them the synagogue of Satan. In fact, turn to 2 Corinthians.

Go left this time. I'm not being facetious. Some of these young men don't know where to find it, perhaps.

2 Corinthians, the 10th chapter, 11th. 2 Corinthians, 11th chapter. You told me you loved the Word, didn't you? If you do, give me another Amen.

Alright. Verse 2, chapter 11. For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy.

For I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear... Now, this is not a Judas preacher. This is not a wayside preacher.

Here's the kind of pastor that you should want. Here's the kind of pastor men and women of God want. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your mind should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

He that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached. Or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, we might well bear with him. Do you see the introduction here? Another Jesus, another spirit, another gospel.

Now, look this way, if you will, please. Don't go to any church unless you know, unless you can discern. First of all, you shouldn't even go to a meeting until you pray through.

You ought to be on your face and ask God to give you the spirit of discernment. And you go in that church and you sit with discernment. And you cannot, you will not ever grow.

You will never be in the perfect will of God until these very things are true. That the man in that pulpit who is preaching has a godly jealousy over you. That you would walk in righteousness.

That he would stand before you even in tears. And he said, I've got one desire. I don't want your money.

I don't want your money. I don't want to build my dreams on your back. Now, listen, hold it.

I don't want anything else from you. But I've espoused you to Christ. I want nothing more out of you than to see you grow into the holy image of Jesus Christ.

My job, Paul said, is to keep you faithful. So you won't cheat. You're espoused to Him.

You're the bride of Christ. And I am here to walk with you. To see you through the battles and the struggles.

And I'm going to put my finger on anything that looks like unfaithfulness. I'm here to walk with you. I'm here to show you.

I've been appointed by the husbandman. I've been appointed by the bridegroom. As a watchman over you.

And I'll not let the devil come with his lies. I'll not let you walk in foolishness. I'll not let you walk in sin.

And then testify that you're faithful to this man. No! I've espoused you. You've been espoused.

And my work, my whole ministry and everything I have, is to keep you faithful to Him. And if I know my heart, and if I know these men who walk with me, and these that God is raising up from Steve and everyone else, all these singers and everything else, there's only one desire from this pulpit, and it'll only be that, that there'll be in New York City a true bride of Jesus Christ that walks in righteousness and holiness before God. It will not be here just trying to slam you down and hit you.

If there's a holiness preacher that comes forth in the pulpit, it'll come through brokenness and tears and a love for your heart. You'll know it. The man won't have to stand up and cry crocodile tears, meet you at the door and hug you and tell you how much he loves you just to get your sympathy or your dollars.

Because the man who really loves you is the man who tells you the truth. I love my children when I spank them. I can't be loving them any more than when I'm spanking them.

Because the Bible said foolishness is bound in the heart of the child, and the rod of correction will drive it far from him. My dad used to put me over the chair. Boy, he'd come down on my backside quoting scripture.

Foolishness is bound in the heart of the child, and the rod of correction will drive it far, far, far from him. Then he had the audacity to say, this hurts me worse than it hurts you. But that wasn't the worst part.

The worst part was then he'd say, David, come here. Hug me. And I had to hug him.

But then I felt his warmth. You see, that's where real holiness preaching comes in. True holiness preaching.

A man can look you in the eye. Holy Father stand beside him. He's going to hug me.

Because you know I told you the truth. You know I watch for your soul. I'm not a wayside preacher.

I'm not a Judas. God's touched my heart to be a watchman, he says. Hallelujah.

How can Satan boldly sit in a meeting and rob people of the truth that comes forth? Because they've so long refused to receive the truth. Now the church at the wayside is the church of wild flesh. They may have the right phrases.

You may hear the words like holiness, purity, separation. The words are all there. But you have to look at the fruit.

And then you've got the problem. And I'll tell you how to judge a church. Look at its teenagers.

Look at its teenagers. Look at all the kids locked in their rooms, blasting their rock and roll. Look at all the kids out, parked in automobiles, having sex.

Think of all the partying in the church. Look at the Christian young people who want to socialize. Look at the man who's more interested in building his church, wanting to have a new building, rather than he is to have the body of Christ built.

And all you talk about is your building fund. Look at the fruit. Is there a man in the pulpit who's going to stand there and look out over those kids and cry and say, I know what you're doing.

And I'm not going to let you die and go to hell. I was praying last night and I saw in the spirit what you're doing. It's my job to say you're going to hell.

It's my job to say repent. There's a man that may be here now. He called me on the telephone.

And I won't embarrass him. If you're here tonight, you don't have to worry because nobody knows your name. Called me on the phone.

And I was supposed to meet with him. But God says don't meet with him right now. Because the man's got a problem in his life.

Woke me up in the middle of the night. And when I saw him, I told him the truth. Brother, I was awake in the middle of the night.

And the Lord told me something about you. And I laid it down and he confessed it. And I said, I'm telling you because I love you, brother, you're here.

It's because I loved you that I told you. If you go to this church, you can expect that also. If you come and we get to know you and God speaks.

We'll come to you and we'll tell you either from this pulpit or privately. We'll not do it to urge you. We'll do it to save your life from the clutches of the devil.

Does that church have a scorching word coming forth? A word of fire that burns your heart? Do those... Listen, you can go to California now to almost... No, not almost there. But there are a whole lot. Even if somebody's got churches.

And you know what the young people... The married couples... Now the big thing now is to trade their wine list. You get together and you talk about all the exotic wines that you bought and purchased. How much a bottle.

There was a time that there was such holy fire and thunder in the pulpit. There was a man that would stand there. They wouldn't dare walk like that.

They wouldn't dare. And then the kids come home. And they see their tongue-talking parents sucking their booze.

And then the kid comes home sucking pot. This is the end of side one. Turn the tape over to continue this message on side two.

And then they call a preacher and said, Help, my kid's in trouble. Well, what do you do with your liquid pot? What kind of an example have you set? Don't call our office and say, Pray for my kids if you're drinking and if you're cursing and you're fighting in your home. You get your home straightened up first, then call our office.

You say you're mad? No, just at the devil. And you know when people hear preaching like this, If you've got sin in your life, you're going to run out crying. Legalism! Unloving! Hard! That's what they said to Jesus.

This is a hard word, who can accept it? And from that day on, they never came back. I told brother Bob before I started tonight, I'm afraid we're going to lose a lot tonight. Okay, I'm going to move on now.

I've got a long way to go. The Metropolitan Stony Church. This is the people of temporary repentance.

Temporary repentance. Are you still in Mark 4? Verse 16. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground, Who, when they have heard the word, Oh, immediately they receive it.

Preach it brother, they preach it. I love that kind of preaching. I've been waiting for this kind of preaching.

Preach it, I love it. I love Jimmy Swagger. He tells it like it is, immediately.

They receive it. Folks, I'm not putting everybody down and saying that because I know that people have been telling us that, that really love the word. And they mean it.

But you see, this first church, Metropolitan Stony Church, full of temporary repentance people, they receive it with gladness, and they have no root in themselves, and they endure but for a time, but afterward when affliction or persecution arises, for the word's sake, immediately they are, what? They're offended. Immediately they receive that, and oh, I tell you how many people I've heard say that since we've come to New York, old brother David. This has been meeting the need of my heart.

I've been looking for this. They immediately receive it with gladness, but the Bible said they have no root in themselves, and that means they have no devotional life. They're not really walking in prayer.

They're not really digging in in devotional life at all. And they have a good talk. They talk about holiness.

They talk about repentance. They talk about loving the word of God. But you see, Christ is the root of David, the scripture says.

But these have no deep holy walk with Christ. They're not plugged into that root at all. They run from meeting to meeting, but they won't walk.

They'll run to meetings, but they won't walk with Christ. They're really not living that everyday practical walk of holiness. They love preaching against sin, especially if it has to do with abortion, if it has to do with drug addiction, alcoholism, because you see, it's not getting very personal.

You can even preach against adultery. You can preach against homosexuality, smoking, fornicating, all these things. But you see, they've not been digging in, but they have never really lived the life.

Jesus said of the stony believers, what he's really saying, when you go beyond the surface, when you dig a little deeper, when you start probing them, you're going to find a hard heart. See, all they can stand is surface preaching. They receive it gladly.

As long as the preaching's two inches thick, everything's fine. But when the Word starts digging down, and goes deeper and deeper, look, the stony heart is there. The Word here, so they endure for a while, and afterward, when affliction or persecution arises for the Word's sake, they are offended.

Now, the word offended here in Greek is earthquake. It's earthquake. Earthquake.

It means total shaking. And I used to think it meant they got mad. No, what it is, well, let me explain it.

There was a young man came in here last Sunday night and heard me preach. And he'd gotten hold of some of the tapes of our opening, our four-day opening. And we were preaching holiness and separation.

And when he talked to me, he backed up a little bit, and he said, Whoa, Brother Dave, he said, that shook me up. You see, earthquake. He said, if what you're preaching is true, then I've not been hearing it right.

He said, that shakes me up. That really trips me up. And that's what that word means.

They're tripped up. They are so shaken. Because it goes against everything their tradition has taught them.

And then the Word comes, and slams against their tradition. Slams against those things that they thought was so right, and they're shaken, and they can't stand to have that shaken. And God sends a Holy Ghost earthquake.

And shows them their sin. And says, you're not walking where you should be. For twenty years you've been going to church and playing games.

You can go to church and sing and shout and talk in tongues, and go and sit and watch Dallas and Dynasty. You've been talking about going to heaven. You sing about going to heaven.

And now your theology's been shaken. Something's happened to you. God's come in.

The Holy Ghost is moving in. It begins to shake you from head to toe. But when the Word comes, they're afflicted by it.

They're persecuted by it. Because they can't stand to be disturbed. The holiness message disturbs them and shakes them all up.

You know, when Jesus began to lay His claims on His disciples, up to that time, these disciples would gather around, charmed by the love that He showed. Charmed by the children who gathered around Him, and the stories He told them. Excited and moved deeply by the demonics that were healed, and all the blind eyes opened, and even the dead.

How would you like to see the dead raised? But then Jesus, knowing that He had little time left, began to press His claims on His people, His disciples. And He finally said, Look, I am the bread of life. He looked at His eyes and His disciples, and I know what He's thinking.

He's saying, in His heart, You really have not been hearing me. You're not really listening to my words. The truth is not sinking in.

But I'm going to tell you now, I don't want to be just your teacher. I don't want to just be your miracle worker. I'm going to be your bread.

I'm the bread. You're going to live by me. You're going to eat my flesh.

You're going to drink my blood. And what Jesus was saying, I'm not going to be first in your life. I'm going to be everything.

You're going to draw everything. You're going to be totally dependent on Me. And that was the message they couldn't stand.

That's the message they couldn't take. That was the earthquake. That's what offended them.

Because you see, they already had Moses. They already had their tradition. They could go to synagogue.

They were comfortable. Some of you are going to walk out here tonight, and I know just as soon as I look you in the eye, you're uncomfortable, and you'll gravitate right back to your comfortable surroundings. Because you don't want anything to shake it.

You don't want anything to move it. You're too comfortable. It makes you nervous.

Am I preaching the truth? You see, when God begins to move, the emphasis moves from the flesh to the spirit. And when you move out of the realm of the flesh and into the realm of the spirit, the work of the spirit is to convict of sin and righteousness and judgment. The realm of the flesh is of emotion and excitement and action.

But I'll tell you what, that's when sin is dealt with. That's when you have something beyond excitement, beyond emotion, and that's what the Bible is preaching. You have resurrection.

Life begins to flow. And that's when the real joy begins to flow. The flesh profits nothing, Jesus said.

The words I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life. You see, stoniness is not sin hardness as much as it is tradition hardness. Please try to understand what I'm saying.

It's really not adultery, fornication, all of these lusts of the flesh that keep people from coming to a place like this where the truth goes forth, or any other church where it goes forth. It's the stoniness of tradition. Nothing hardens a heart more than a denominational tradition.

Nothing. The hardest people I meet are in the Bible belt. And I've gone down, I love North Carolina people, I've gone down to Carolina sometimes and I've said, Lord, I'll never go back.

Let me go back to the streets of New York because people know they have a need. I go down to some of the Bible belt and you can't even convince people they have a need. They're so tradition bound, they're so, my church, that's it, I've got it all.

I don't want that, brother, sister. I've got all my options open to the Holy Ghost. If I, I don't care if he's 15 years old, if he's got the Holy Ghost on him, if he's heard from heaven, I want to hear what God has to say.

And I'm open. I'm open. I want to hear it.

Well, let's get on to the church of choking thorns. Verse 18 and 19. And these are they which are sown among thorns, such as hear the word.

But the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches and the lust of other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. Now look this way, please. You see, these people have a double harvest.

For a good while they're bearing fruit. And these are the kind of people that offer the pastors here such hope. Because you see them growing, you see them coming along, they're hearing the word, and it gives you, and you, we often say, hey, did you see so and so, and words, not specifically, but in essence means, now there's somebody you can build with.

There's some people really going on with God, and boy, we go home and it just blesses our hearts. Now thank God that many of them are going to be good soil and they're going to produce 30, 60 and 100. But you see, this choking thorn people, they go along and they're bearing fruit, but then these thorns, these distractions come in.

And what the thorns are are actually distractions. And the first distraction he talks about here is being, and by the way, that means swamped, strangled. The very word that he's using there in the Greek for thorns means strangling, swamped.

And first of all, the Bible says, if you look at right there, the cares of this life, they're strangled, they're swamped by making a living. This pressure of just making a living. And this is the problem in New York City, probably more than any other city, the hustle and bustle to make enough to live for so many of you to sit here.

And yet, that can't be excused. You can't use that as an excuse, saying, I can't pray, I can't read my Bible, I can't put God first because God understands, surely it takes all my time just to make a living. The Bible says, the cares of this life, the cares of this life.

And they come to church then, not praying for the quickening of the Holy Spirit, and sit there so tired, so troubled about making a living, that the Word does not bear fruit. And that's a dangerous place to be in. If you're in that condition, I say it lovingly, ask God, when you come in and sit, oh Lord, I want to clear my mind, I want to clear my heart, I don't want the cares of this life to swamp me.

Then you see them a year later, and say, hey, you were going along so good, what happened? Well, I just got too busy. Busyness is going to send a lot of people straight to hell. Too busy.

Too busy. And then he said, the other seduction, the deceitfulness of riches. And that's the guy, that's the person who says, well, if I make more money, I can give more money.

Or if I were financially free, I could give my full time to the Lord. And that's the biggest lie out of the pit of hell. I have yet to meet a man who's ever made enough to give his full time to the Lord.

Because he never gets enough. You know, when I was at Teen Challenge in New York, there was a big ring of prostitutes broken up. And in fact, it was Sister Celeste, who was the first one of that group that came in.

And I remember her being in my office. She was in the front page of the paper. And some other prostitutes, fur coats, Cadillacs.

And they were prostitutes servicing some of the best known names, wealthy people in the city, and around the country, and around the world. And I remember Sister Celeste saying to this effect that the prostitutes had a little box. And they put their money in that box.

And their goal was to get \$5,000 and get out. But they got the \$5,000 and then they upped it to \$10,000. And if I get \$10,000, I won't have to do this anymore, I'll be financially free.

And then they upped it to \$20,000. And then to \$25,000 and to \$30,000. And then until finally, the whole game then is to watch it grow.

It becomes a game. It's not prostitution anymore. It's watching this thing just mount.

And of course, one of the things that convicted Sister Celeste, she was attached to her cat and found her cat dead under the refrigerator and fell under conviction. I mean, the very death of a cat. She began to think of life and death.

And this is the same thing with Christians. This deceitfulness of riches. Never having enough.

And striving so much. And in this striving, choking the Word of God. Choking this fruit.

They were fruitful, but the deceitfulness of riches entered in. And the thorns began to spring up. Now, I've got to move on so quickly here.

I want to talk about the church of pure heart. And then I want to give you a prophecy from Isaiah, telling us a wonderful prophecy of what God's going to do about opening the ears and the eyes of His people on the last day. Boy, I've just been shouting all afternoon reading what He's promising.

But in Mark, the fourth chapter, look at verse 20 now. Here's the good part. And these are they which are sown on good ground, such as hear the Word and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, some a hundred.

Alright, look this way please. Let me tell you what I believe good ground is. Good ground, and by the way, the ground is a heart.

Ground is your heart. The seed is the Word of God. Good soil, good ground is a heart that's open and hungry for the Word of God.

Ready to receive it. This heart, this good soil, esteems the Word of God more than life itself. It comes to church, this heart comes to church, so anxious, God, what do you have to say to me today? God, I'm willing to hear.

Oh Lord, I'm willing to walk. Speak to me. And it's impossible for this kind of heart to ever be offended.

Ever. Do you remember when the Scripture came to the prophet? And it was written on both sides? The scroll was given to the prophet and written both sides, woes and lamentations. And God sent him a letter.

And on both sides, woe, woe, woe, lamentation, lamentation, lamentation. Judgment, judgment, judgment. And the Bible says he was told to eat it.

And he said it became honey to my belly. Do you know that that's what a good heart is? Even when the word of judgment comes. It's honey.

It's honey! Because God is speaking it. It's never bitter. Oh, it may be bitter to the mouth, but it comes sweet to the belly.

Hallelujah. A little tough going down. But when you receive it, it's life! Opens your eyes.

Honey opens your eyes. David had that readiness to hear. He said, when you said, seek my face, my heart said unto thee, thy face, O Lord, will I seek.

You said, seek me. Lord, I said, I'll seek you. You said, repent.

Lord, I repent. Hallelujah. Good soil Christian is one who's awake and one who is redeeming the time.

Ephesians, you don't have to turn to Ephesians 5, 14, 16. Awake thou that sleepest. Arise from the dead.

And redeeming the time because the days are evil. I'll tell you what I believe is the there's a question that I can't answer. I believe it's the greatest puzzle to the heart of God.

Of everything that God sees in Christianity He looks out the church. I believe there's one thing that puzzles God. Now it doesn't mean that God doesn't know everything, but it's a wonderment.

I can't, I don't understand it. You know what it is? Why is it that people that are really good people, good, they love God, they love people, they'll do anything for anybody, they're the sweetest, nicest people you've ever seen, but they won't seek God. They won't pray.

They won't dig into their Bible. They walk with God for years and years. They hear preaching, sermon after sermon, message after message about walking in the Spirit and walking with God.

But all they do is sit and hear the Word. And they love to hear the preaching, but they will not, they will not seek God. What is the purpose of all of this preaching if it isn't to get us all to seek His face? As David said, you said, seek me.

My heart answered, I will seek you. For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth. But that truth has to bear fruit.

I know pastor's wives. They're wonderful. They're the most giving, loving wives in the whole world.

And not a handful of them. Do you ever hear groaning in the Spirit? You never hear them pray. You can go into their home and you'll never see them crack a Bible.

Same with wives. You wives that are sitting here right now. This is the greatest puzzle to my mind.

I've spent all last week, I hope to have brought a word to you that would answer that, but I don't have the answer yet. Maybe brother Bob will bring a message or brother Don. I don't have that answer.

Why people can sit and hear preaching so straight, so strong, right out of the throne room of God, and yet go home and waste their time. Just sit there and waste it. No hunger.

Oh, they love to come to church, but there's... I don't figure it out, brother Bob. It's for the life of me. I don't understand Christian workers.

I don't understand people who can sit there in front of a television set and waste hours, not go into that secret closet and shut the door and pray to the Father in secret and the Father sees the secret and rewards you openly. Especially when judgment's right at the door. I don't understand it.

It's a puzzle, but I believe God's going to change it. God's about to change it all. Hallelujah.

I don't have the answer, but I've got a promise. I want you to go to Isaiah, the 10th chapter. Can you give me just five more minutes? Isaiah 10.

I'm about... I'm winding it up here. Isaiah, the 10th chapter. Praise you, Lord.

There's a glorious prophecy that there's going to be a remnant rise, going to be refined by holy fire, and God's going to burn up all the thorns and all the briars and He's going to have good soil and He's going to bring forth great fruit. Hallelujah. When the Lord sent... When I was preparing this message, the Holy Spirit said, Go to Isaiah 10.

Go to Isaiah 10. I read it, re-read it, and I said, Lord, I don't see it. I don't see it.

Why am I in Isaiah 10? The Lord said, It has to do with everything in this message I'm giving you. Stay there. Stay there.

I'll show it to you. So I stayed and stayed. About five o'clock this afternoon it came.

Yeah, I mean, it just came right through. I want you to look, if you will, please. Verse 5. Isaiah 10, verse 5. O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand, and my indignation, I will send against him, I'll send him against the hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath, will I give him a charge to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the street.

Look at this way, and I'll just quickly set this stage. The Assyrian is the rod of God. That's the judgment of God upon a people that had shut their ears to the truth, allowed thorns to spring up, their hearts had grown stony.

They represent the worst of all three of these churches that I've mentioned. They represent the worst. It's all incorporated in what Israel had become.

So God is sending judgment, and they're being judged now. The Assyrians are bringing this judgment. But I want you, you know what the Bible says? In fact, if you go down here in verse, look at verse 17.

Here's the promise. And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his holy one, who's the holy one? His holy one for a flame, and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briars in one day. All right, if you will look this way, and I'll tell you what I believe the Lord is saying.

Jeremiah 23, 29, don't turn there, but it says, Is not my word like a fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? Now let me tell you what I believe God's about to do. You see, the people that are being choked have two harvests. It means there's good soil.

They brought forth fruit, and then the thorns came up and choked it. So the good soil's there. All that needs to be done is that the thorns and the briars be removed and burned.

Isn't that correct? So God says, I'm going to come down on all of these who've really loved me. They've been bearing fruit, but they've been so busy trying to make a living, they've been so wrapped up, and I'm going to remove them. I'm going to lift this kind of burden.

Doesn't mean God's going to make you rich. Doesn't mean you're not going to have to struggle anymore to make a living. But God said, I'm going to change your thinking, I'm going to change your mind, and I'm the holy one of Israel, and I'm going to come with fire, and I'm going to burn out one day all your thorns and all your briars, because I see in you good soil.

You've got a heart for me. You really don't want to be like this anymore. You don't want to be too busy.

You really don't want those riches. You really have a heart to be free to serve me. So I see that, and the holy one of Israel will become a fire in your bosom, and he's going to go poof, and he's going to burn out all the thorns.

Verse 20. And it shall come to pass in that day that the remnant of Israel and such as escaped to the house of Jacob shall no more lean upon him that smote him, but shall lean or stay upon the Lord, the holy one of Israel, in truth. They're going to lean on the Lord, not on preachers.

Tell you what, if you're leaning on a preacher, or your church, you're going to be disappointed. Here's the people not looking to man, they're looking to Jesus, the son of the living God. Hallelujah.

Everywhere I go, people say, where can I find a church? Where can I find a church? Quit looking for a church. Look for him. He'll lead you to a church.

He'll lead you to a body. Hallelujah. Well, there was another scripture I wanted, but it's here.

I think it's in... Well, it must be finished. At least the Lord's lifted the burden. Never go beyond what he says.

Hallelujah. Well, I'm not looking for anybody but Jesus. Every church in America would close their doors and it wouldn't affect those who are walking with the Lord.

Every TV evangelist could fail, but it's not going to affect God's holy remnant. They're not going to be moaning and groaning about it because they've got their eyes on Him. I'll tell you what.

Go for the fire. Go where there's fire because it's going to burn out your thorns. Go where there's fire.

Go where there's a scorching word and get burned. Hallelujah. Go for the earthquake.

Well, some of you had an earthquake tonight. He's shaking you. We mean business here.

This is not hype. Hallelujah. Are you going to go on with the Lord? Have you set your mind and made a commitment? I want to hear what God has to say.

I want to walk before Him with clean hands and a pure heart. And I'm not going to hold on to my sins. I'm laying them down.

That's all you've been hearing here. And God's just going to keep playing on that harp. It's a heavenly harp.

You're going to keep playing that tune until the work's accomplished. Hallelujah. But I'll tell you what.

When you receive it, it becomes joy. People left this morning after hearing that strong word. Bob was preaching.

Tuesday night after that strong word, Don was preaching. And someone has already called us the church of reproof. Well, what they're really saying is it's the church of scorching fire.

It's that earthquake church. I'll tell you what. You know why? He's shaking everything in us.

God shook me up and said, get back to New York City. God said, judgment's coming. Boy, He shook everything I had in me.

He shook me up and said, quick, because there's not much time left. I'm going to do a quick work in righteousness. And God promised us that we wouldn't have to try to bring in a circus here to make it happen either.

We wouldn't have to light up this and put on a show. We wouldn't have to have some kind of a fleshly circus here. All we had to do was preach His word, and God would attract people who love the fire of God and want to walk in holiness, and God will put a body together.

Hallelujah. If that's what you want, you're welcome. If not, you're going to gravitate back to wayside.

Let's pray. Hallelujah. Singers, come.

Lord Jesus, our hearts burn in us tonight because we want to hear what You have to say. We're not going to be afraid of truth, Lord. We're going to receive the truth and accept it.

Lord, finish the shaking in us. Whatever has to be done, shake us. Shake us good.

Hallelujah. This is the end of this tape. For a copy of this tape or any other tape by David Wilkerson, write to WorldChallengePOBot260 Lindale, TX 75771 or call area code 214-963-8626.

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