

# Matthew 13:22, 23. the Explanation of the Latter Part of the Parable of the Sower.

by Favell Lee Mortimer

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*The sermon explains the parable of the sower, focusing on the thorny ground hearer who is enslaved by worldly loves and must apply to God to remove the thorns from their heart.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 65:10, Ezekiel 36:26, Matthew 13:22, 1 John 2:15

**Topics:** "Spiritual Growth", "Worldly Temptation"

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## Description

Favell Lee Mortimer preaches about the different kinds of hearers of the word of God, focusing on the thorny ground hearer whose heart is entangled by cares, riches, pleasures, and worldly desires, hindering the growth of good fruit. The thorns represent the distractions and temptations of the world that draw affections away from God, leading to a fruitless profession of religion. Only God can remove the thorns from our hearts and prepare us to receive His word, transforming our hearts of stone into hearts of flesh to bring forth fruit.

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## Transcript

Let us now consider the two latter kind of hearers which our Savior has described.

One is the thorny ground hearer--the soil of his heart is not so dry and barren as that of the stony ground hearer. The word sinks into it, and springs up, and blossoms, and buds, and produces fruit; but, alas! not good fruit. What is the reason of this failure? Thorns have grown up with the good seed, and have injured the heavenly plants. The thorns may have appeared very small and insignificant when first the seed was sown, but they increased in strength, and at length destroyed the hopes of the husbandman.

We cannot be at a loss to discover what the thorns represent; for our Lord distinctly declared them to be cares, riches, pleasures, and the lusts of other things. There are some people, who, when they hear the word, are arrested, touched, convinced, persuaded. They acknowledge they are sinners, they see Christ is the only Savior; they feel the value of their souls, and they desire to lead a religious life. But their affections are drawn off from God by worldly things. The stony ground hearers were induced to abandon their profession through fear of persecution; the thorny ground hearers, while they continue to make a profession of religion, are enslaved by the love of the world. They attempt to serve God and mammon. What must be the result of such an attempt? Destruction. "For if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

The world wears many different forms, and tries to win us under various disguises. According to our age, our dispositions, and our circumstances will be our temptations. Pleasure allures the young, and care entangles the old--reputation is the desire of one, ease is preferred by another; but each of these is a thorn, and will prevent the good seed flourishing in the heart. What then can we do to avoid making a fruitless profession? We must apply to God to take the thorns out of our hearts; we cannot do it ourselves, but God is willing to do it for us. He can quench every inordinate desire, he can overthrow every earthly idol; he can come with sovereign power, and reign in our hearts.

No heart by nature is an honest and good heart. "There is none that understands and that seeks after God." Every heart of nature is like the wayside, the stony ground or the thorny ground. God alone can prepare sinners to receive his word. He can plough up the wayside, can take away the stones, and can pluck out the thorns.

There is a gracious promise in the Scriptures that He desires us to remember--"I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." Let us plead this promise in prayer. There is abundance of good seed scattered all over this land--thousands of Bibles, and millions of tracts. Why are not more souls converted? The hearts of men are unprepared.

Has God graciously prepared our hearts? Have we received the word, and brought forth fruit? If it be so with regard to any of us, to Him be all the praise who softened our hard hearts. Perhaps we can remember the time when sermons made no impression upon us, when holy counsels were disregarded, and even a mother's entreaties despised. And how did God prepare our hearts? Did He make us eat the bitter fruits of our works, until, like the prodigal, we said, "I will arise and go unto my Father?" Or did He subdue us in a sudden manner, as He did Paul, when He stopped him in the midst of his wicked career, ploughing up his heart by the Spirit, as the seed was cast in, "Saul, Saul, why persecute you me?" Or did He lead us by gentle and gradual methods to seek his face, watering the ridges of our hearts, settling the furrows, making it soft with showers, and then blessing the springing of His word? (Ps. 65.)

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