

# Thorns That Choke the Word

by Phil Beach Jr.

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*Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the dangers of worldly distractions that choke the word of God and hinder spiritual fruitfulness in our lives.*

**Duration:** 49:49

**Scripture:** Mark 4:13

**Topics:** "Word Of God", "Spiritual Fruitfulness", "Worldly Distractions"

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## Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the dangers of worldly distractions in his sermon 'Thorns That Choke the Word,' focusing on the parable of the sower from Mark 4. He explains how the worries of life, deceitfulness of riches, and desires for other things can choke the Word of God, rendering it unfruitful in our lives. Beach encourages believers to seek first the Kingdom of God and to be patient as God cultivates fruitfulness in their lives, which reflects the character of Christ. He warns against the subtlety of these thorns, urging the congregation to prioritize their relationship with God over material concerns. Ultimately, he calls for a heart that longs for Christ above all else, ensuring that the seed of God's Word bears abundant fruit.

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## Transcript

I fixed the wireless mic last week, so we're trying it out here. Hopefully this will do one of two things. It'll enable me to pace like I always pace around.

I have a hard time standing still. That's a bad habit, I know, but we'll see how this works out. Let's turn our Bibles to Mark, chapter 4. I just want to read the section where Jesus explains the parable of the sower, starting in verse 13.

And he said to them, do you not understand this parable? And how will you understand all the parables? The sower sows the word, and these are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown. And when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them. And in a similar way, these are the ones on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, who when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy.

And they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary. Then when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away. And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns.

These are the ones who have heard the word, and the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. And these are the ones on whom the seed was sown on good soil, and they hear the word and accept it, and bear fruit 30, 60, and 100 fold. I want to come back to that scripture in just a minute.

John chapter 12, verse 24, starting verse 23, and Jesus answered them saying, the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit.

James chapter 5, verse 7, be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it until it gets the early and late rains. You, too, be patient.

Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. What I'm showing here is that the farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil. God's plant is something, and he's looking for fruit.

Everything that God does in our lives is to that end. To bear that, to see that fruit comes forth. John 12, 24, when we read, Jesus said, except the grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it remains alone.

But if it dies, it bears much fruit. The fruit that God is looking for is just like that which was planted. He's looking to see the character and nature of Christ brought forth in the people.

Romans chapter 8, 28 and 29. We read it last time I was speaking. I forget when it was.

All things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he foreknew he predestined to be conformed into the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Everything God is doing in our lives is toward that end, to bring forth Christlikeness, to bring forth that character of Christ in our lives, that purity, that holiness, something more of him.

James tells us he's waiting patiently. No, he tells us to be patient for the coming of the Lord, because he's waiting for the fruit. He's waiting to see Christ in his people.

He's waiting to see the image of Christ come forth in a greater way, in a glory, in a purity in us. In the same way, the sower is sowing the word. He's sowing the word of God.

He's sowing it into our lives. Why? To what end? So it'll bear fruit. The fruit that he's looking for is Christlikeness, more of him, to be like Jesus.

That's the end that God has in mind, making a people that'll be like him, a dwelling place for God by the Spirit, where he can dwell in a holy temple. I want to preface what I was going to say with this, so we can get firm in our mind the goal that we're fixing towards here, the fruit that God is looking for. It's not some nebulous fruit out there that doesn't have any meaning.

But he's looking for something specific. He's looking for something like what was planted. He's looking for something just like his son.

And he's looking for it in us, in each one of us. So when we look at the parable of the sower here, yes, the sower sows the word. God comes, and he sows his word into our hearts.

And he's looking for fruit. He's not looking for the words to come back out. He's looking for the living word.

He's looking for his son to come forth in our life. But the warning that's given us here, and the one section that I want to focus in on, is the thorns. And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns.

These are the ones who have heard the word. And the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. I focus on this because it's, to me, thorns are the killer of this whole parable, at least in my life.

These are the things that come, and they enter in, and they choke out the word, and it becomes unfruitful. What does it mean to become unfruitful? It's not bringing forth the life that it's supposed to. It's not bringing forth the character of Christ in our life, all these things.

It's so easy to get wrapped up in the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and desire for other things, and go on living like that, and not realize that we're being choked. The very life of Christ is being choked. It's not able to come forth.

It's not able to grow. It's not able to manifest itself in our life, because we're being choked. Let me turn to Matthew 6. I hope you don't mind.

I'm going to be reading a lot of scriptures here this morning. For this reason I say to you, do not be anxious for your life as to what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor for your body as to what you shall put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air.

They do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? And which of you, by being anxious, can add a single cubit to its lifespan? And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow. They do not toil, nor do they spin.

Yet I say to you that even Solomon, in all of his glory, did not clothe himself like one of these. But if God sow a raise the grass of the field, which is alive today, and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will he not much more do so for you, O men of little faith? Do not be anxious then, saying, what shall we eat? Or what shall we drink? Or with what shall we clothe ourselves? For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek. For your Heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore, do not be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of his own.

The worries of the world, what are we going to eat? What are we going to drink? What are we going to put on? How am I going to pay the rent? What about the car payment? What if my car breaks? All these things. We have to guard our hearts so they don't choke us. We can get so wrapped up in worry and care and concern about these things.

And we just, it's so easy to justify to ourselves, because these are things that we need. These are things, you can't just let your car go until it falls apart. And you can't, you know, you got to pay the rent.

But the Lord says, don't worry. It's not taking care of business that the Lord is, you know, telling us not to be caught up in, you know, the worries of the world. But there's an over-worry, a concern, you know,

where we give ourself into it.

You know, and that'll choke the word, that'll choke the life out of you. Let's look in Luke, chapter 10, verse 38. Now as they were traveling along, he entered a certain village.

And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. And she had a sister called Mary, who moreover was listening to the Lord's word, seated at his feet. But Martha was distracted with all her preparations.

And she came up to him and said, Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me. But the Lord answered her and said, Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things. But only a few things are necessary, really only one.

For Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her. You are worried and bothered about many things, but Mary chose the good part. Once again, Martha, she was busy doing something good.

I mean, she was preparing a meal for Jesus. But nevertheless, she'd gotten wrapped up in it. She'd gotten worried about it, concerned.

And she wasn't putting first things first. You know, Jesus came to her house. What an opportunity to sit at his feet and worship.

What an opportunity just to worship at his feet. And Mary chose that part. Sometimes I think we get too concerned about making sure everything is just right.

So much about our preparations and getting everything in order. Even getting ready for church, coming to church, make sure our hair's just right, my clothes, whatever. I had to shave this morning.

I had to run around the house looking for the cord for my razor because it was out of juice. But if you let these things, they'll choke it out of you. They'll choke the life out of you.

Just worrying about things rather than just him. And that's something the Lord wants to free us from. You know, not that we don't deal with things, not that we don't shave or get dressed or eat.

But just to, you know, it's got to be a work of the Lord by his spirit and our hearts to allow us to take care of what we have to take care of our everyday life, but not get so wrapped up in it that we forget him. You know, that we don't first worship the Lord, that we don't first always bow down at his feet. You know, when we have opportunity, when the Lord's presence comes, let's bow down and worship at his feet and lay down our cares.

You know, we need the Lord to help us to lay down the cares of this world. First Peter 5.7 just says, casting all your cares upon him for he careth for you. You know, that in itself should free us.

Just the thought, the knowledge, he cares for me. The one who created the universe, the one who spoke this world into existence, the one who clothes the lilies of the field and feeds the birds, he cares about me. In fact, the scripture said, we read it before, more than the birds.

We're more important to him than the birds and the lilies of the field. He's going to take care of it. He'll take care of us.

We don't have to worry. Let's concentrate on him. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

He'll take care of us. We don't have to take care of ourself. That's his job.

And it'll choke out the word. Let's let him free us from these worries so that his word can be fruitful in us. The cares of the world, the worries of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desire for other things enter in and choke the word.

It becomes unfruitful. I would say, more than anything else in this country, number two thorn probably should be number one. The deceitfulness of riches.

We live in such an affluent country. We have so much, yet I don't think there is more discontentment with what we have. Probably anywhere is either.

I want to read a few scriptures. Proverbs chapter 23, first five verses. When you sit down to dine with the ruler, consider carefully what is before you, and put a knife to your throat if you are a man of great appetite.

Do not desire his delicacies, for it is deceptive food. Do not weary yourself to gain wealth. Cease from the consideration of it.

When you set your eyes on it, it is gone. For wealth certainly makes itself wings, and like an eagle flies towards the heavens. The deceitfulness of riches.

This is just such a beautiful illustration of that to me. You can seek it, you can seek it, you can seek it, and it flies away. And there's nothing you can do about it.

But there's warnings here. When you're in the presence, here it says of a ruler, but somebody that has a lot, don't let your heart start coveting and desiring it. It says put a knife to your throat if you're a man of great appetite.

Don't desire his delicacies, it's deceptive food. It's so deceptive, we look at somebody that's got a lot, and we think, boy, if I just had that, I'd be happy. It's a lie.

You wouldn't be happy. You'd be as miserable as he is. You just don't know he is.

It's true. Riches are so deceitful. All the scriptures in the Bible that speak of riches, at least from what I see, most of them are warning us against them.

1 Timothy chapter 6, verses 9 and 10. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation, and a snare, and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many a pang.

I think that if we took all the scriptures in the Bible, all the warnings in the Bible, and if instead of saying riches or money, if we called it by, if we totally disassociated ourselves with money, if we just read them objectively, we would say to ourselves, I'm going to stay far away from X. Those who want to get X fall into all sorts of diverse temptations and trials. They've been ruined in the faith, shipwrecked. Those who've longed for it have plundered themselves.

We'd say to ourselves, let's get far away from X. I don't want any of X. If the Bible says that can happen from X, I don't want half X. I don't want a quarter. I don't want to go near it. But riches are so deceitful.

There's something in our heart that, well, that doesn't apply to me. I mean, it does say here, instruct those who are rich in this world not to be conceited or fix their hope on uncertainty. Hey, see, there's rich people here that are safe, too.

Maybe I can be one of those, right? I can be one of them. See, that's me. That's me right there.

I'm not one of those one that's going to chase after riches and go to destruction. I'm one of those ones that God's preparing to be rich because he needs some of them, too. Who's going to witness to the rich people, you know? Really, riches are so deceitful.

We all think that we're different, you know? Oh, we can have lots and lots of money. I'm not going to covet. Mm-mm, not me.

I'm different. Guess what? We're not different. We've all got the same flesh, and we all can be choked.

Once again, what we're talking about here, why do we care? What's the big deal? Because God is looking for fruit. God's looking for the character and nature of his son to be brought forth in us. And he's telling us there in Mark, chapter 4, that the deceitfulness of riches will choke it out, and he won't get what he's after.

We can't fall prey to the deceitfulness of riches and still expect the fruit to be brought forth that God's looking for. There's a couple more scriptures I want to read here on this one, because this is a big one with me. Matthew, chapter 6, verse 19.

It's interesting to look at all the scriptures about money and riches. And I think more than any other topic in the Bible, these are scriptures that we try and explain to ourselves that they don't really mean exactly what they're saying. You know what I mean? Well, yeah, it kind of means that.

But it could also maybe not quite mean that. For instance, do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Here's the deceitfulness of riches, and here's the snare. And it's in all of us.

It starts to become our treasure. We start to look for ways we can give me more. And the snare for the rich people.

What is it saying, Timothy? I said it earlier. Instruct those who are rich in this world not to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches. We're all rich by the standards back then, I guarantee you.

And it's so easy for us to fix our hope on the uncertainty of riches. As long as I've got a few bucks in the bank, I can handle what comes along. Car breaks down, whatever.

It's all right. And it's so easy to start getting our hope fixed on what we have if we've got a little bit. And if we don't got a little bit, it's the same thing.

Now it's like, oh, I'm worried. What am I going to do if the car breaks down? It's the same root, the same sin, just one with and one without. But we still want it.

Our tendency is to fix our hope on the tangible thing, cash, money. It's a god. What did Jesus say in Matthew chapter 6? No man can serve two masters.

Either he will love the one. See, this is another one of these scriptures we don't really like to believe. No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to the one and despise the other.

You cannot serve God and mammon. You cannot. Not it's hard to.

He didn't say it's hard to serve both. He says you cannot. Can't happen.

No way. If we find ourselves in the trap, the snare of making our decisions on how we're going to get more money, living our life for the next opportunity to get more money, we can't serve God. We're going to love.

Because eventually, God's going to come and ask for another one of them quarters that we were talking about earlier. He's going to say, I want you to take the job where you get less money, because I've got a purpose for you there. What are you going to do? Well, if you're seeking after the riches, you're going to say, God, you can't have that quarter.

That one's mine. But it's the same thing. You know, you can't serve God in money.

We have to be willing to make the decision that will cost us, cost us money, if we're going to serve God. And God will put us to the test. And as he was setting on a, I wasn't going to read the whole thing, but I think I will.

As he was setting on a journey, a man ran up to him and knelt before him and began asking him, good teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said to him, why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments. Do not murder.

Do not commit adultery. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness.

Do not defraud. Honor your father and mother. And he said to him, teacher, I've kept all these things from my youth up.

And looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, one thing you lack. Go and sell all you possess and give to the poor. And you shall have treasure in heaven.

And come, follow me. But at these words, his face fell and he went away grieved, for he was one who owned much property. And here comes the scriptures we don't believe.

And Jesus, looking around, said to his disciples, how hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God. And his disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God.

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. And they were more astonished and said to him, then who can be saved? And looking upon them, Jesus said, with men it is impossible, but not with God, for all things are possible with God. See, that's where we

get our out.

See, I can be rich and go to heaven. See, it says it right there. With God, all things are possible.

And because of that, we totally negate the whole thing Jesus is trying to say to us. Don't set your heart on it. It's harder with a lot of money to enter into the kingdom of God.

It's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. Think about it. Let's get back to our acts.

If somebody said, if you have condition X, it's going to be harder for you to get into heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. How many people will be in line saying, give it to me, give it to me, I'll take that, I'll go the hard way? We wouldn't, would we? But because it's money, the God of this country, just about, and if we're not careful, it'll be the God of our hearts, we go after it, and we go after it with a passion. I want more.

It doesn't matter how much we have, I still want more. One more scripture on this, we'll go on, actually two more. Luke chapter 14.

This is the same thing with the quarters again here too. If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

For which of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, this man began to build and was not able to finish. Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and take counsel whether he is strong enough with 10,000 men to encounter the one who is coming against him with 20,000? Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks terms of peace. So therefore, so therefore, no one of you can be my disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.

No one of you can be my disciple who does not give up all his own possessions. Nothing that we have is ours. Belongs to him.

We can't claim ownership of it. It's the deceitfulness of riches. We think we own it.

If truth be said, God owns everything. If we've given our life to him, all we have is his. And he can do with it what he wills.

And we have to be willing to relinquish it in a moment to him. But if the truth be told more often than not, we don't own our riches. Our riches own us.

We're controlled by what we have. We make our decisions. We revolve our life around how to keep what we've got and how to make it grow into more.

And that's where we need God to help us. The cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desire for other things enter in and choke the word. And it becomes unfruitful.

Hebrews chapter 13, verse 5. Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have. For he himself has said, I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you. To me, that's the

whole key right here.

Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have. Well, what have you got? He himself has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you. We've got him.

That's worth more than all the money in the world. All the money that, who's the rich guy, Bill Gates and whoever else, all put together. It's not worth it.

He said, I will be content with what you have. For he himself has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you. What a thing to be content with.

We've got Jesus. We've got him. We've got the most precious thing in the universe.

He's given himself unto us. Be content with what you have. For he himself has said, I will never leave you or forsake you.

See, that's what we need in order to truly be free from the deceitfulness of riches, by longing after it. We need to have a revelation from God of the preciousness of what we do have in him, the preciousness of Jesus Christ. What a satisfying thing to know that we have him, that we have treasure in heaven, that we have this treasure poured into earthen vessels.

We've got treasure far greater than the piddly things that this world has. Let's not let the devil deceive us into chasing after those things and getting caught up with them and choking out the word. He's trying to bring forth treasure in our life that's far greater than the treasures that this world has.

He's wanting to give us treasures, treasures of himself, something far greater. Let's not get caught up by the thorns. The cares of the world and the deceit.

The thorns are the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches. And the desire for other things, to enter in and choke the word. You notice there it doesn't say the desire for sinful things.

It says the desire for other things. A lot of times I think we justify getting caught up with a lot of desires by saying, well, there's no sin in that. There's no sin in that.

That's not a sin. That's not a sin. But the problem is we get so full of desires for this, that, and the other thing.

Yeah, it's not a sin in itself, but our hearts become so divided and it chokes out the word. It chokes out the very life, the love that we need to have for him, that singleness of heart that he wants to develop in us. All these things will choke it out.

1 Corinthians chapter 9, 24 to 27. Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control on all things.

They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore, I run in such a way as not without aim. I box in such a way as not beating the air, but I buffet my body and make it my slave.

Lest possibly after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified. See, the heart that Paul has here, he's not necessarily trying to keep himself from sin here. But just an athlete, he's going for the mark.

He's going to win a race. He's got to have his heart steadfast at the end of that race. He can't stop halfway through the race and say, I'm a little tired.

I think I'm going to take a nap. There's no sin in taking a nap, is there? Well, it's true, but he's not going to win the race. He's running down the race.

It's a marathon. Oh, there's McDonald's. I love McDonald's.

There's nothing wrong with that, but he's not going to win the race. See what I'm saying? There's a lot of things that you can do that aren't sin. But if you try and do them all, you're not going to win the race, the desire for other things.

2 Timothy 2.4, I've got it written down here. I won't even look it up. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life.

I didn't write it all down. I want to read the whole thing, excuse me. 2 Timothy 2.4, no soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.

Once again, the soldier, he can't be entangled with everyday life. There's a war going on. He's a soldier.

He's in foreign territory. You know, I mean, think of where we've been recently, Bosnia and these other places. You can't have the soldiers, you know, in the place where they're at, fighting.

They've got to be prepared, ready for battle. And they say, wow, look at that nice store there. I think I'm going to go in and browse.

You know what I mean? We can't be entangled with the affairs of everyday life. Or another good example. Say I'm with the Special Forces.

I'm an undercover guy, OK? And I'm placed in a position in a company for waiting for one day, I'm going to get a call, and it's going to be time to blow up the radar on the runway or something. The company runs the airport. And as I'm working there, I'm an employee, I get a paycheck and everything else.

And as time goes on, I say, hey, I could get a little better paycheck if I get myself into this other job here, right? We get entangled. And I start getting entangled in that, but what happens? I get that other job. The call comes, well, the other job isn't in a position where I have access to the radar anymore.

The whole mission got blown because I got entangled with something else. That other job isn't a sin, although I guess it would be for me. You know, if I was that soldier, the same thing.

We've got to see our whole life as belonging to God. Our whole life is for His purpose. The decisions we make, the things we seek after, we have to ask ourselves.

I love a thing that Michael and Danielle have up in their bathroom. It says, I will place no value on anything I have or may possess except in its relation to the kingdom of God. We need to look at our whole life that way.

What's this thing that I'm seeking after? It might not be a sin, but is God going to get something out of it? Is that consistent with me winning the race? Is that consistent with me fulfilling my duty as a soldier? Or is it a

side issue? It may not be a sin, but is it going to slow me down? Is it going to keep me from winning the race? Philippians chapter 3, but whatever things were gained to me, those I have counted loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him in the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings being conformed to His death, in order that I might attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ.

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet, but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of Christ Jesus. Let us, therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude. And if anything, you have a different attitude.

God will reveal that to you also. However, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained. Brethren, join in following my example and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.

For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their appetite, whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things. For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of his glory by the exertion of the power that he has even to subject all things to himself. Once again, the whole picture there, we have Paul just striving for the one thing.

He laid aside everything. He counts everything else to be lost, dung, garbage, refuse, for the sake of gaining Christ. And he puts the same thing towards us.

Walk, join in following my example. Observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us. And he puts it before us.

For our citizenship, he talks about those who have appetites. They go after other things. And they eventually become enemies of the cross of Christ because eventually the cross will come.

And you're going to have to decide, am I going to keep following those things or am I going to let it die? And we'll find ourselves fighting against God if we don't. But it says, our citizenship is in heaven, from which we, I love the way he does it. It seems like whenever the Lord tells us to give something up, he always puts it in front of us.

Such a greater treasure. Our citizenship is in heaven, from which we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of his glory by the exertion of the power that he has, even to subject all things to himself. What a glory.

The cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desire for other things entered in and choked the word and becomes unfruitful. Let's not let those thorns in. They're deceitful, the deceitfulness of riches.

All these things, they come from not having a vision of Jesus Christ, not having a vision of the God who loves us and cares for us, not realizing the great treasure that he's given us, the great treasure that lies before us. You know, all that run in a race, they all want to receive a prize. Run that you may win.

Don't let anything distract you from the prize. Our citizenship is in heaven, from which we eagerly wait a savior. We have such a great prize, such a great calling ahead of us.

God's building a holy temple for his presence to dwell in for all eternity, and he's called us to be a part of it. He wants to make us just like his son. Let's get our eyes on the treasure, on the prize, and ask the Lord to free us from these thorns.

Don't let them lie to you. Don't let riches lie to you. Don't let the other things lie to you.

It's so easy to get in the mindset that I can have this, that, that, that, there's nothing wrong with it. I can spend my life seeking for more and more money. You could, but at what cost? At what cost? God's offering us something so much greater in himself.

We need to ask the Lord to give us a revelation of him that so surpasses anything in this world, so surpasses any love of this world, that we're freed from it. And then God will have what he's after. Then that word that he's sown will bring forth, some 30, some 50, some 100-fold.

See, that's what God's looking for, that word that he's putting us to bring forth, that seed that he's planted to bring forth after its own kind. The word that he speaks to us, it's all designed to bring forth that fruit. And that fruit is so precious.

I mean, we'll be so blessed for all eternity if we just let the Lord bring forth this fruit in us, if we just allow him to free us from these cares, from the love of money, from the desire for so many things. And remember, he knows what we have need of. That's the thing, he knows.

Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. All these things will be added unto you. All the things that we need, he'll give us.

Let's press on to him. Let's take the treasure. Lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven where moth and dust can't corrupt and where thieves can't break in and steal.

Of yourself, show us yourself, Lord. Show us, Lord, the surpassing greatness of the treasure of Jesus Christ. Lord, the high calling that you've called us to.

Lord, it's so much greater and higher than any calling, any earthly calling, any position on any job, Lord, any salary, anything, Lord. There's nothing in this world that compares with you. Oh, God, write it upon our hearts.

Allow us to see it, Lord. Allow us to be like Paul, that we'd have such a vision of you that we'd count all other things but done, that we would run in such a way that we might gain the prize, that we wouldn't turn aside after anything, Lord. Lord, we ask that you would do these things in us so that your word might be fruitful, that you, Lord, the farmer, would receive the precious produce of the soil that you're waiting for.

Oh, God, we look to you. We look to you, Lord. Lord, we confess we're all guilty of these things.

We're all the same. We all have hearts that are so easily turned aside after this world. It's so easy to hope in the uncertainty of riches.

It's so easy to get caught up in 100 other things, but Lord, give us hearts that are single. Give us hearts that are steadfast, that hope in you, that long for you. Lord, give us hearts that long for you the way people in this world long for money.

As it said in Matthew there, all these things that Gentiles eagerly seek after. Give us the same heart, Lord, that we eagerly seek after you. Our citizenship is in heaven from which we eagerly await a savior.

Oh, God, let that be the passion of our heart. Lord, I ask this in Jesus' name. Allow us all, Lord, to give ourselves to you 100%.

Allow us all to make a decision to flee from the deceitfulness of riches, the desire for other things, the cares of this world. Show us, Lord, today, tomorrow, the next day. Each time one of these thorns starts to wrap itself around our neck, so to speak.

Oh, God, give us the grace to tear it down. Give us the grace to nip it in the bud, Lord, so that your fruit can come forth in greatness in our lives, so that you would be pleased, Lord, with your harvest. In Jesus' name.

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