

Luke 8:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

Analysis

And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. The thorny soil represents divided hearts where God's word competes with worldly concerns. The verb **are choked** (sumpnigontai, συμπνίγονται, present passive) indicates ongoing strangulation—the word is progressively suffocated by competing priorities. Three specific threats are named: **cares** (merimnōn, μεριμνῶν, anxieties, worries), **riches** (ploutou, πλούτου, wealth), and **pleasures** (hēdonōn, ἡδονῶν, sensual gratifications).

These three cover life's major distractions: anxiety about necessities (cares), obsession with accumulation (riches), and indulgence in gratification (pleasures). The phrase **of this life** (tou biou, τοῦ βίου) emphasizes temporal, earthly existence opposed to eternal priorities. The result is tragic: they **bring no fruit to perfection** (ou telesphorousin, οὐ τελεσφοροῦσιν)—no mature, complete harvest. Unlike rocky-soil hearers who fall away, thorny-soil hearers continue but remain fruitless, their spiritual lives strangled by worldliness. This may be the most dangerous soil—religious profession coexisting with practical worldliness, appearing alive but spiritually barren.

Historical Context

Thorns and thistles plagued Palestinian agriculture, growing vigorously alongside crops and competing for nutrients, moisture, and sunlight. Farmers knew that unless weeds were removed, crops would be choked out. Jesus lived in an occupied land where Roman taxation created economic anxiety ('cares'), Greek commerce promoted materialism ('riches'), and Hellenistic culture celebrated sensual pleasure ('pleasures'). His audience understood these pressures intimately. The warning particularly challenged wealthy members of the early church (Luke 6:24, 12:13-21, 16:19-31, 18:18-25; James 5:1-6). Luke's Gospel repeatedly warns against wealth's spiritual dangers—more than any other Gospel. First-century believers faced the constant temptation to compromise faith for economic security or social acceptance, making this parable urgently relevant.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. Which of the three thorns—cares, riches, or pleasures—most threatens to choke out spiritual fruitfulness in your life?
2. How can believers with significant wealth or responsibilities avoid becoming thorny-soil hearers?
3. What does 'bringing fruit to perfection' look like practically, and how can we assess whether our lives are bearing mature spiritual fruit?

Interlinear Text

τὸ δὲ εἰς τὰς ἀκάνθας πεσόν οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ
G3588 And among G3588 thorns that which fell they are G3588
G1161 G1519 G173 G4098 G3778 G1526
ἀκούσαντες καὶ ὑπὸ μεριμνῶν καὶ πλούτου καὶ
which when they have heard and with cares and riches and
G191 G2532 G5259 G3308 G2532 G4149 G2532
ἡδονῶν τοῦ βίου πορευόμενοι συμπνίγονται καὶ οὐ
pleasures G3588 of this life go forth are choked and no
G2237 G979 G4198 G4846 G2532 G3756
τελεσφοροῦσιν
bring
G5052

Additional Cross-References

1 Timothy 6:17 (Parallel theme): Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

Mark 4:19 (Parallel theme): And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

Matthew 13:22 (Parallel theme): He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

Luke 8:7 (Parallel theme): And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.

Luke 21:34 (Parallel theme): And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

2 Timothy 4:10 (Parallel theme): For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

John 15:6 (Parallel theme): If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

Luke 16:13 (Parallel theme): No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

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