

Mark 4:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Jesus identifies three thorns: '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.'

1. 'Cares of this world' (αἱ μέριμναι τοῦ αἰῶνος)—anxious worry about temporal concerns, legitimate needs becoming consuming preoccupations.
2. 'Deceitfulness of riches' (ἡ ἀπάτη τοῦ πλούτου)—wealth's deceptive promise of security and satisfaction it cannot deliver.
3. 'Lusts of other things' (αἱ περὶ τὰ λοιπὰ ἐπιθυμίαι)—desires for anything besides God.

The result: 'choke the word' (συνπνίγουσιν τὸν λόγον), making it 'unfruitful' (ἄκαρπος)—producing no spiritual fruit.

Historical Context

Jesus' three-fold diagnosis addresses universal human temptations transcending culture and era. Ancient world knew these thorns: anxiety about provision (Matthew 6:25-34), wealth's seduction (1 Timothy 6:9-10, 17-19), sensual indulgence (1 John 2:15-17). Early Christians practiced simplicity, shared resources, resisted materialism. Church history records wealth corrupting institutional church (medieval opulence, simony). Reformers and Puritans warned

against worldliness. Modern Western Christianity faces particular danger from materialism and consumerism—thorns choking fruitfulness while church attendance continues.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. Which thorn poses greatest danger to your spiritual fruitfulness—worry, wealth, or wandering desires?
2. How does materialism and consumerism function as thorns in contemporary Western Christianity?
3. What practical steps can you take to remove these thorns and cultivate fruitfulness?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	αἱ	μέριμναι	τοῦ	αἰῶνος	τούτου,	καὶ	ἡ
And	G3588	the cares	G3588	world	of this	And	G3588
G2532		G3308		G165	G5127	G2532	
ἀπάτη	τοῦ	πλούτου	καὶ	αἱ	περὶ	τὰ	λοιπὰ
the deceitfulness	G3588	of riches	And	G3588	of	G3588	other things
G539		G4149	G2532		G4012		G3062
ἐπιθυμίαι	εἰσπορευόμεναι	συνπνίγουσιν	τὸν	λόγον	καὶ		
the lusts	entering in	choke	G3588	the word	And		
G1939	G1531	G4846		G3056	G2532		
ἄκαρπος	γίνεται						
unfruitful	it becometh						
G175	G1096						

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;

Matthew 19:23 (Parallel theme): Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Philippians 4:6 (Parallel theme): Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

John 15:2 (Parallel theme): Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

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.

Luke 10:41 (Parallel theme): And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

Isaiah 5:2 (Parallel theme): And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.

Isaiah 5:4 (Parallel theme): What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?

2 Peter 1:8 (Parallel theme): For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ecclesiastes 4:8 (Parallel theme): There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother: yet is there no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither saith he, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This is also vanity, yea, it is a sore travail.

