

Mark 4:1-20 (Part 3)

23 May 2021

ICEBREAKER: What is your favorite thing you own or use?

LARGE GROUP QUESTIONS:

(Read verses 18-19) Jesus described the last two types of hearts as the **crowded heart** and the **good heart**. Notice Jesus' breakdown of the **crowded heart**. The **first thorn** found in crowded hearts is **the worries of this life**. As discussed last week, weeds and thorns **compete** directly with grains or flowers for the same limited resources of soil, nutrients in the soil, water, and sunlight.

Similarly, **worry and faith compete** for the same limited resources of our **time, money, energy** and **trust**. Jesus teaches that worry and faith cannot exist at the same time in the same space in your heart. You cannot worry and have faith at the same time.

1. How do you **talk to others, make plans, or even sleep** when you are filled with **worry**?

Jesus states the **second thorn** found in crowded hearts is the **deceitfulness of worldly wealth**. Deceit means appearing to be one thing, but actually being another. It is promising one thing, but delivering something different.

Although wealth is **a gift entrusted** to us by God, Jesus also warned that we can be deceived by wealth. In Mark 10:25 Jesus described the consequences of wealth's deception saying, "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."

2. In what ways have you seen **worldly riches deceive** or **hinder** others from **seeking** or **committing to Jesus**?

The **third thorn** found in crowded hearts is **the desires for other things**. In keeping with the weeds and thorns analogy, **the desires for other things compete** with **the desires for the things of God**. In every area of our lives of relationships (e.g. friendships, dating, marriage, or family), money (e.g. bills or long-term career) or faith (Church, or Christianity versus other religions), we must decide which desires to pursue—those for other things or those for the things of Jesus.

The question will not be whether we will pursue, but what we will pursue.

3. What can **cause** you to **pursue other things**, rather than the **things of Jesus**?

(Read verses 20) In contrast to the three unfruitful soils, Jesus calls us to be **good soil**. For the **hard heart** to be good, it must be **tilled** and **"broken up."** The pride of our hearts must be broken up by the truth of the Word of God.

For the **shallow heart**, it must develop **depth**. It must not only be **inspired** by God's word, but be deeply committed and **obedient** to it. **Perspiration** must be added to **inspiration**. But for the **crowded heart**, it must be thoroughly **weeded out** of **all things competing with** the authority of **God's word**.

4. To become **good soil** that **blesses others** thirty, sixty, even a **hundred fold**, what is the **one thing** that would need **to change** in your life?

CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE & USE PRAYER LIST AS BIBLE BOOK MARKER

PRAYER GROUP TIME

(Make a list of people whom those in your group plan to share Christ with this week.)
