

## MESSAGE 3:

# THE HINDRANCES TO THE SEED

### **SUGGESTED PASSAGE:** Luke 8:11-14 (NASB)

<sup>11</sup> "Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God. <sup>12</sup> Those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they will not believe and be saved. <sup>13</sup> Those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away. <sup>14</sup> The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity."

**MESSAGE GOAL:** The goal of this message on *The Hindrances to the Seed* is to describe the different ways in which the enemy uses the distractions of this life as "thorns and weeds" to choke the life out of the new believer once the seed of the gospel has been sown into the "thorny" soil of the distracted, preoccupied, and worried human soul.

**INTRODUCTION:** The one thing that we all have wrong with us is a distorted soul. To varying degrees, everyone's soul has been infected and affected by sin. Nobody's soul is naturally intact, and it is very deceptive. We may think that something is wrong in one place or another, but actually all problems are manifestations of a dysfunctional soul.

Spiritual transformation, fundamentally, is the healing of the soul. The soul is the self, your inner being. Your soul is not your body; your body is merely the casing for your soul. Your soul involves your mind, emotions, will, and consciousness.

Most people settle for soul management, not soul transformation. They just try to keep their souls under wraps, make them behave. Even if they can't keep their souls under wraps, they try to keep their bodies from obeying their souls. They try to hold the soul down so it doesn't fully express itself. However, once the seed of the gospel has been embedded, since it can never be taken away, Satan (the enemy of the soul) must come up with a different strategy. If he cannot take the seed away, his second strategy is to keep the seed from reaching proper growth.

He wants to keep the seed hostage so that it does not mature as it was intended to do; he wants the growth of the seed to be hindered. Satan knows our strengths and weaknesses, and he seeks to exploit those in us. To do this, he uses a number of different methods.

One type of soil Jesus taught about was the rocky soil. This is shallow ground where the seed does not get to have a firm root. These people are believers; Jesus said they received the seed with joy. They celebrated the reception of the seed that is the new life in Christ; they received salvation. However, the enemy still wants to thwart the development of the seed so that it does not grow. In rocky soil the roots do not go deep enough, so that when bad weather comes, they are not able to withstand it and do not grow and become productive.

Trials have two sides. One side is God allowing a difficulty in your life in order to develop you. Trials are always, from God's point of view, developmental in nature. Every time you have a trial, you should dignify the difficulty by pursuing God and seeking what He wants to develop in you by allowing it in the first place.

So when you have difficulties, two things are happening: God is trying to develop you and Satan is trying to defeat you. Satan removes, or keeps, the roots from running deep and the shallow Christian wants to stay on the surface, the topsoil. The seed is there, but it is not rooted well. It doesn't go very deep because the person has decided not to go very deep.

### **SERMON POINTS:**

#### **1. GOD'S WORD PROVIDES STRONG ROOTS:**

We need this strength because we know the enemy will attack us

- Matthew and Mark add that the rocky soil person did not take root when trials arose "because of the Word" (Matthew 13:21; Mark 4:17)
- This is another of the devil's strategies; but if he cannot snatch the seed immediately, he has back-up plans to thwart our growth, including bringing trials and persecution

our society's problem  
is not solely our *government's* problem.  
it is **the church's** problem.  
it is *our* problem.



These attacks are aimed at the Word of God that has taken root in our lives

- God's Word challenges the perspective of the sin-affected soul, so Satan focuses his attack on the Word implanted in the soul
- We need to stay grounded in the Word to give the roots depth

## **2. THORNY SOIL IN OUR LIVES CAN CHOKE OUT THE GROWTH OF THE SEED:**

If the devil can't get at us in other ways, he will use the world to choke and distract us

- This is one of the enemy's back-up plans if he fails to snatch the seed before it is established in our hearts, as he does on the soul with rocky soil
- The key here is that the things which distract us are the cares and worries of "this life"
- When we fall into this trap, we are living for this life instead of the life to come

"Thorny" Christians are those who want to move on, but are getting tripped up on the way

- A Christian who is allowing the things of this life to choke him is like a fish out of water, gasping for air
- Choked Christians can no more survive the "alien" environment of this world than a fish can in the alien environment of dry land; we aren't built for it

## **3. WE ARE BEING PREPARED FOR KINGDOM LIVING NOW, NOT JUST IN HEAVEN:**

One of the exciting truths about Christ's millennial kingdom is that Christians are coming back with Him to exercise rule for these one thousand years

- We know that Christ will descend from heaven at His second coming and set up His throne in Jerusalem to rule the world for one thousand years
- The Bible says in Revelation 19 that Christians who were raptured before the tribulation will return with Christ to rule and reign with Him in His kingdom

Your faithfulness for Christ now determines the extent of your rule, or lack thereof, in the kingdom

- You are not getting prepared for heaven; you are getting prepared for earth. Before you live in heaven, you will live a thousand years with Jesus Christ managing the affairs of this planet

- Right now, Jesus is reigning spiritually in heaven at the Father's right hand, and we are seated there with Him, so there is a spiritual rule on earth until He physically comes to take care of the ruling Himself

## **SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS:**

### **LOCATING THE PAIN:**

You may have heard the story of the man who went to his doctor complaining that every part of his body was in excruciating pain. The doctor said, "You mean every part of your body?" The man said, "Yes, any place I touch I keel over in pain." The doctor proceeded to ask the man to touch his ear, his nose, his knee, and even his hair—and every time he did so, the man yelped in pain. The doctor suspected the problem and examined the man's finger only to find that it was dislocated. Sometimes that's how our lives feel. It seems that everything is wrong when there is really only one thing wrong, but it is affecting everything else.

### **GAME FILMS:**

Every week, football teams study the game films of the team they're going to play that week, to identify strengths and weaknesses in order to exploit the other team's weaknesses. Satan has studied the game films of our lives. He knows our propensities, our strengths and weaknesses, and seeks to exploit those weaknesses.

### **TEMPER TANTRUMS:**

We have all seen a child throw a temper tantrum. That's not good, but it's also possible to be an adult and still be throwing spiritual temper tantrums when we don't get what we want. We do this when we erupt in rebellion if the Word of our Father doesn't agree with what we want, and we are determined to have our way. Folks can throw temper tantrums in church because what they hear from God and what they want, prefer, and desire are in conflict, and they get ticked off.

### **CHOOSING THE MORE VALUABLE:**

Suppose someone offered you ten million dollars with just one stipulation—that exactly one year after you got the money you had to commit suicide. That means only twelve months to enjoy the money. Now, most people would think it crazy to

**our mission field is not merely across the sea.  
it is across the street.**





turn down ten million dollars for any reason. But if you're in your right mind, you are going to say "No deal!" because life is about more than money. You would rather have your salary and many more years to live because life is too valuable to throw it away like that. But what Satan does is similar to this offer. He makes the riches and pleasure of this life more important than the life to come, and too many people take him up on his offer that leads to death.

**SERMON LINES:**

This message will help you and your audience identify and deal with the signs and symptoms of a heart soil that is either rocky or thorny, and deal with the root issues so that nothing is allowed to thwart the growth of God's good seed within us.

This message will also help your audience understand the key principle of kingdom living—that we are being prepared to live as kingdom people in the "here and now" of this life, not just the "there and later" of Christ's millennial kingdom when He comes to rule.

**QUOTES BY DR. TONY EVANS:**

"Most people settle for soul management, not soul transformation."

"Every time you have a trial, you should dignify the difficulty. The way you do that is to begin to pursue what God is seeking to develop in you by allowing the trial to come your way in the first place."

