

Audio Transcript of Sermon

June 26, 2021

The Stony and Good Ground, Wayside, and Thorns

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. When Jesus Christ walked the earth as a man, He worked with a small group of followers whom we call the disciples. The message given to them thousands of years ago applies to us today. He shared with His disciples that they were there to reap the spiritual harvest, to finish the work of God the Father. He shared with them that they would be reaping a harvest they did not sow, and in reaping the harvest would receive wages and gather fruit for eternal life. Jesus also said that this harvest does not come in the future, the harvest is now. Let's read John four verse thirty-one.

John 4:31-38

31. In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.

32. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.

33. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat?

34. Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

35. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

36. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

37. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.

38. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

The harvest Jesus was speaking of was a harvest not of crops, but of people. Jesus knew then of God's desire to bring all people to salvation, and Jesus had compassion for the multitudes of people he saw because they had no spiritual connection because they lacked a shepherd. When we look in the world today, do we look at the people with compassion like Jesus did or do we look at the world with religious superiority? Every twist and turn that we see in society today is the result of people not being connected to God and lacking a shepherd today. We

have a choice of finding fault with these people when their lifestyle moves away from the Bible, or we can have compassion on people who live in a world that is so far removed from God. I'm quite sure that when Jesus saw these people, he saw people with sin in their life, because when there is no spiritual guidance, people tend to gravitate towards sin. Jesus also saw sickness and disease and healed people of these. Jesus could have been critical of the people for their sins. He could have confronted the people of their sins much like he confronted the scribes and Pharisees. The gospel records Jesus had compassion on the people because they had no shepherd. Jesus then told the disciples that they should pray that God sends more laborers into the harvest, because there are few laborers and the harvest is a bountiful harvest. Matthew nine verse thirty-five.

Matthew 9:35-38

35. And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

36. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

37. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;

38. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

Later, Paul would write to the Galatians and tell them that we reap what we sow and he encouraged the Galatians to reap spiritual matters and eternal life, to make sure that in doing good, we do not grow weary. He added that we are to do good to all people, especially to others who are called in the faith. Galatians six verse six.

Galatians 6:6-10

6. Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

7. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

8. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

9. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

10. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

Jesus had compassion on the multitudes he saw who were wallowing away in a life where they had no spiritual foundation, and James indicates we are to equally have compassion for others who are also called in the faith. He also writes in his letter that we are to have patience while we are here on earth, just like a farmer has to wait during the entire growing season before there can be a harvest. We cannot become impatient as we wait for the return of Jesus Christ, because Jesus will return when God the Father determines the crop is ripe and it is time for the spiritual harvest. Just like Jesus had compassion on people who were not called and who also likely had sin, we are to practice compassion on others who are called like we are called by not grudging against each other. This means we are not to murmur, sigh, or groan about others, because judgment is now on the house of God. When we murmur, sigh, or groan about others, we run the risk of bringing judgment to ourselves. Instead, we should review the many wonderful stories of God's mercy from the Bible, such as how God ultimately intervened in the life of Job. These stories should remind us that God has pity on each of us and is rich with mercy. James five verse seven.

James 5:7-11

7. Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

8. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

9. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

10. Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

11. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

When each of us was called by God the Father, we were called to bear much spiritual fruit. We were not called just to exist, but to grow and produce spiritual fruit. From a food perspective, we think of fruit and vegetables. We were called to produce spiritual fruit, not spiritual vegetables. All fruit starts as a flower that grows from the ovary of the plant and matures containing the seed for the next generation within itself. Vegetables are all parts of a plant and could include parts of the plant that will never grow the next generation. When we eat spinach, we are eating a leafy part of the plant that if planted will cause nothing to happen. Spinach must be allowed to flower, and then the seeds of that flower would be used to grow the next generation. We know fruit is best eaten ripe, fully mature, because of the taste, and vegetables are typically eaten when seeds are not yet produced. When vegetables go to seed, or become fully mature, we tend not to eat them because of the taste.

We know we are called to bear much fruit, and our focus is traditionally spiritual fruit. Because all mature fruit has seed for the next generation within it, do we see any responsibility in ourselves for the next generation of those whom God will call? Biologically, parents see the need to prepare their children for life as adults. Do we spiritually see a responsibility to do the same for our children? Do we who are more spiritually mature see a responsibility to do the same for those who are children in the faith? In life, it's not good when parents do not have the best interest of their children in mind, and it's equally not good when children ignore their parents. When this happens spiritually, a curse is pronounced. When the hearts of the older generation are disconnected from the hearts of the younger generation and this is left unchecked, God will smite the earth with a curse. We don't know what kind of curse, but the notion of being smitten with a curse sounds painful to me, and I would rather avoid pain. Malachi four verse five.

Malachi 4:5-6

5. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

6. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

If we think we are called to bear fruit and we do not see a connection to the next generation, we don't understand how fruit work, and we run a great risk of bringing a curse to mankind. In John's record, Jesus explains that we are

individually branches of the vine. To bear fruit, we must remain connected to the vine. To bear fruit, remembering that fruit is always mature and has within it the seed for the next generation, we must live our life very closely connected to Jesus. If we become separated from Jesus, we will wither and die just like if a branch of a vine gets severed from the vine. John Fifteen verse one.

John 15:1-17

- 1. I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.**
- 2. 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.**
- 3. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.**
- 4. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.**
- 5. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.**
- 6. 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.**

As we live a life closely connected to Jesus, we need to remember that we are given power to ask and it will be done for us, not for selfish gain, but so we can grow much fruit. We are given this open door to grow spiritually and as we grow spiritually, growth happens because we remain close to Jesus and ask for the growth to happen. When we become spiritually mature and bear much fruit God the Father is glorified. Contrast that to when Satan stands before Him to accuse the brethren. When we bear much fruit we glorify God the Father. When we spiritually develop fruit, spiritually develop the seeds for the next generation whom God the Father will call. We show love to God the Father and Jesus Christ by keeping the commandments of Jesus as Jesus kept the commandments of God the Father. As we love through keeping the commandments our joy is full and we are to love each other as Jesus loved us and this starts by developing spiritual fruit which will never go away. Verse seven.

- 7. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.**
- 8. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.**
- 9. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.**

- 10. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.**
- 11. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.**
- 12. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.**
- 13. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.**
- 14. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.**
- 15. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.**
- 16. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.**
- 17. These things I command you, that ye love one another.**

We know as Christians we are to spiritually grow fruit. We know biologically, all fruit contains the seed for the next generation, and that if the older generation ignores the younger generation and the younger generation reciprocates to the older generation, a curse is pronounced. Jesus used many parables in his teachings and fulfilled prophecy in so doing, and through one of His parables explained why some people fall away from the faith. Jesus explained that there are four types of people who hear the word of God. Typically within the Church of God, we think there is little to nothing we can do to impact what happens when somebody is called, and because we are called to bear much fruit knowing that fruit contains the seed for the next generation, and because we know when there is a disconnect between generations a curse is pronounced, we have a greater impact on the next generation of Christians than we might have ever considered. It is time for each of us to accept that responsibility for ourselves. With each of the four types of people whom God calls there are things we can and should do. Let's read the parable given to us in Matthew thirteen beginning with verse one.

Matthew 13:1-23

- 1. The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side.**
- 2. And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.**

3. And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow;
4. And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:
5. Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:
6. And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.
7. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:
8. But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.
9. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.
10. And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?
11. He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.
12. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.
13. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.
14. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:
15. For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.
16. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.
17. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.
18. Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.
19. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

20. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;

21. Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

22. 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.

23. But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

In the parable, Jesus explained that the seed that fell by the wayside is like a person who hears the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and because they don't understand it, they give up on their calling. It's not like they didn't have a calling, they didn't understand what they heard and therefore couldn't take any action on that calling. Remember that Jesus said that the evil one came and took away what was sown in the heart. Imagine, if you will, you had to explain the color blue to a person who had been blind from birth. Explaining the Kingdom of God to a person who has been called is not as hard as trying to explain a color to a person who has been blind from birth. For those who are called where seeds fell by the wayside, the seed was sown in their heart as shown in verse nineteen. When Jesus said, *"Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest,"* we need to remember that the hope for the harvest begins when the seed is sown. Because each of us is called to be a laborer for the harvest, none of us can ignore what Jesus and God the Father are doing. Each of us must work diligently so that the seed that is sown comes to harvest. Even the person represented as seed that is sown by the wayside is a person who has been called by God. We ignore that person to our own judgment. That person whose seed is sown to the wayside is a person who does not understand. As a laborer in the harvest, and everything that is done in the field from the moment of sowing until the harvest is for the harvest, when we have a person who is new in the faith who does not understand, who does not get it, yet who had the seed sown in their heart, is not a person who was not called, is not a person who because of the circumstances and challenges of life left the faith. A person who does not understand, does not understand. As a retired teacher, if you think students automatically understand when taught, you are mistaken. Students frequently do not understand, and additional teaching often using different styles and methods

must be used. Never does a teacher tell the child who cannot understand why two plus three is five that instead they can put down just any number. The right answer never changes. Teaching how to get the right answer might change as needed based on individual circumstances. Paul changed how he taught based on his audience so understanding could be increased, such as when he was in Athens and taught about the unknown God. Acts seventeen verse twenty-two.

Acts 17:22-32

22. Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

23. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

24. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

25. Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

26. And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

27. That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

28. For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

29. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

30. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

31. Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

32. And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.

In preaching to the Athenians, Paul changed how he taught so they could comprehend God. Think about it. Paul took God the Father and essentially put

Him in the pantheon of Greek Gods in the minds of those listening so the Greeks who were called could understand, so that those where the seed of the Kingdom of God had been sown in their heart, would not fall by the wayside. Was Paul incredibly disloyal and blasphemous in how he taught, or did he understand that not understanding would cause the seed of the calling to fall by the wayside?

Whether it is a newly called person or a person who has grown up in the faith from childhood, not understanding what is being taught can cause them to fall by the wayside. In life, people who sense they are good at something will generally keep that as an interest in their life to some degree. At best, people who are not good at something will tolerate it as a chore. In learning, when people don't understand, unless there is a very strong support system, dropping out can be expected. In the church, we are that spiritual support system for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

The second type of person who is called is described by Jesus as receiving the seed into stony places. This person is called. They hear the word with joy and yet because there is no nutrient rich soil and only hard stony ground, they have no way to take root, they wither and die. As Christians it should come as no surprise that people new in the faith have a different perspective than people who are mature in the faith. In our human existence, we tend to interact with people differently based on where that person is in life. For instance, when we are interacting with a child, we almost always consider what the child can understand and do. We recognize that it would be unreasonable to expect a child to do something that the child is not ready to do. We would never give the car keys to a young child so the child could drive themselves wherever they needed to go. Instead we would drive the child. Even as children start to grow into adult size bodies, it's important to remember that within that adult-size body is the mind of a developing child, a teenager. It would be unfair for us to expect that child or teenager to act like a mature adult in life's situations. We might verbally set that expectation with the child and yet have mercy for the child knowing that they will often not live up to that goal until they themselves are a mature adult.

Similarly with people new in the faith, we need to understand that just like there is a process of human growth and development, there is a process of spiritual growth and development. Notice what Peter wrote in first Peter two verse one.

1 Peter 2:1-8

- 1. Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,**
- 2. As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:**
- 3. If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.**
- 4. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,**
- 5. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.**
- 6. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.**
- 7. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,**
- 8. And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.**

Going back to those who are called where the seed is sown on stony ground, the problem is with the preparation of the field, which is done by the laborers of the harvest. Instead of being a nutrient rich field in which the seed can easily take root, an impermeable stony soil is all that is available. Because those who are already called are the laborers of the harvest, it is up to each of us to make sure the field is ready to be sown with seed. We are the impermeable stony field when we expect those who are newly called to respond like people who are spiritually mature. One thing that we can do to prevent the seed from being sown on stony ground is to be nurturing and not judgmental when interacting with others. It is not our place to judge. It is our place to encourage others. Notice first Thessalonians five verse nine.

1 Thessalonians 5:9-11

- 9. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,**
- 10. Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.**

11. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

When we act from a position of anger, especially to people new in the faith, their experience will be with angry religious people. If they respond to angry religious people at first, there will come a time when angrier non-religious people will cause them to instead respond to them. In times of trouble for the newly called person whose seed was cast on stony ground, the person will leave the faith. We who are spiritually mature can help protect those new in the faith by understanding they are new in the faith and not spiritually mature, adjusting how we talk with people new in the faith much like we adjust how we talk with children and teenagers, and by not judging instead being comforting and encouraging.

The third type of person who is called is the person who received seed among the thorns. This type of person hears the message of the Kingdom of God while also seeing all of the good and evil that is in this world. They get their priorities wrong pursuing what they see in this world and become unfruitful, and spiritually wither away. In one of his very first messages, Jesus taught there was a need to prioritize seeking the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness first. In the same message he told us God would provide for our needs as we properly prioritize our relationship with God. Notice Matthew six verse twenty-five.

Matthew 6:25-34

25. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

26. Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

27. Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

28. And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29. And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

31. Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32. For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Those who get choked by the cares of this world, have their priorities out of place. Because we know our needs will be met as we seek first the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness, it might cause us to wonder how a person could be choked with the cares of this world. This often stems from recurring frustrations we have within our own life. Instead of being frustrated, we need to remember we are told to be content with what we have and where we are in life. When we are content, we are satisfied with what we have. This contrasts with an attitude of needing more. People who need more will always need more no matter what they have. When you are content, you are satisfied with what you have. Being content does not mean you ignore what you need hoping for a daily miracle from God. We need to remember that God works through people, including each of us in our own lives. There is nothing wrong with considering the resources that God has given you and determining the best way to take action for your circumstances. The problem arises when we look beyond what we have been given by God. Hebrews thirteen verse five.

Hebrews 13:5

5. Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

Being content with what we have does not mean we never improve our financial circumstances in life. When we were born we brought no wealth with us into this world and when we die we will take no wealth with us to the grave to spend in eternity. While we are alive if we have nothing to very little, we will have a very hard life. It's normal to accumulate physical possessions in life and to grow

personal wealth. We are told not to work for this end objective in Proverbs twenty-three verse four.

Proverbs 23:4-5

4. Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom.

5. Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.

The Hebrew word for labor in verse four is *yaga*, Strong's Hebrew word 3021 and this word implies working so hard you collapse. There is nothing wrong to work to make money. There is nothing wrong to maximize the amount of money you make while you are working. As an employee that means qualifying for a pay raise or promotion that comes with more money. When self-employed this means expanding your sources of revenue while decreasing your expenses. There is a problem when you exist to chase wealth. We are to seek first the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness.

It's another matter when you work yourself to fatigue just to put food on the table. We need to remember that we have a merciful God who helps us when we ask for His help. Matthew seven verse seven.

Matthew 7:7-20

7. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

8. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

9. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

10. Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

11. If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

With the understanding that God will provide for us, especially when we ask for His help, we are then told to treat others as we would like to be treated, as this puts us before the gate that leads to eternal life. While in our current place in life we are told to beware of false prophets who act as if they come in peace but deep

down want our destruction. We are told to look at what they do with their life. Do they live a life where the fruit of the spirit is easily seen, or do they live a life reflecting a physical existence, focused on the things of this world? Verse twelve.

12. Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

13. Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

14. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

15. Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

16. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17. Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

20. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

We get choked from the cares of this world when we see evil in this world. We need to remember why the evil exists in the first place and how that evil will be defeated, the establishment of the Kingdom of God. We cannot unilaterally decide we will fight every evil we see, because we will become choked by the evil we see instead of staying focused on the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness. However, as we seek first the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness, and then as we have opportunity, we are to do good to all men, especially to people who are called. Galatians six verse nine.

Galatians 6:9-10

9. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

10. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

The final type of person who is called receives seed in the good ground who both hears and understands the word, who also grows spiritually. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul gave a list of the fruit of the spirit. Galatians five verse twenty-two.

Galatians 5:22-26

22. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23. Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

24. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

25. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

26. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

Each of us needs to examine ourselves to see where we are on this list. Which fruit of the spirit do we see in our life and what do others see, and by how much. Do we see a tiny harvest of the fruit of the spirit, or do we see a bumper crop?

Each of us is called to be a laborer in the harvest, and the harvest is about all people who are called. As Jesus told his disciples that harvest is not to be looked at as a future event, it is happening now as judgment is now on the house of God. On the list of the four types of people who are called, where the seed fell by the wayside, in stony ground, choked among thorns, or on good ground, where are each of us, and what can we change about ourselves and how we interact with others so that more people who are called find themselves also in that good ground?

Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together next time on the Sabbath. Until then, thank you for joining us today.