

Too Busy

Joe Slater

Well over a century ago, J.W. McGarvey commented on the parable of the sower (Matthew 13; Mark 4; Luke 8). Regarding the thorn-infested soil, which Jesus said represented the heart where God's word was choked out by "the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches," McGarvey observed: "These today outnumber all other classes, and perhaps they have always done so."

I concur with brother McGarvey's view. Jesus said the wayside soil represented people who don't understand the word when they hear it. No doubt there are a few of these, and none of us has perfect understanding. But the vast majority who hear the pure word of God understand what He requires of them.

Those who fall away due to persecution Jesus described as rocky soil, where the seed cannot establish roots. Here again, persecution may drive a few away even today, but we are blessed to live in a time and place of relative peace in that regard.

By far the greatest hurdle we face is that third category: the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches. A thousand and one activities compete with the Lord for our time, attention, and resources. Most of them are good things. That is, they are not immoral or inherently sinful. Nevertheless, unless we are careful, we may allow these otherwise "good" things to crowd out the essential things.

The same can happen with making money. We take on more and more commitments, striving for that higher standard of living, that newer car, that larger house, that extra gadget that we suppose will make life

more enjoyable. But how does all of this affect our relationship with God?

Do you find yourself so "busy" that you don't have time to read the Bible? to pray? to assemble with the saints regularly? to be an active participant in the work of the church? It isn't really that we don't have time. There are always 24 hours in a day. We simply choose to budget our time differently. We put other things ahead of the Lord. We allow the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches to choke the word of God right out of our lives!

J.W. McGarvey recognized this problem over 100 years ago, when life was far slower-paced than it is now. Certainly we, in our hectic lives, would be wise to exercise great caution, lest we strangle God's word with things that might otherwise be wholesome and good. "Let the one who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" 1 Corinthians 10:12).

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Concerning Trees and Us

Have deep roots

Branch out

Be flexible

Keep growing on the inside

Bloom often

Show your colors

Stretch upward toward the sun

Raise your limbs to heaven

Bring forth fruit as long as you live

--via Buchanan Dam, TX

Untie Your Colt

"Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it'" (Luke 19:30-31).

Jesus was preparing to make his triumphant entry into Jerusalem. This sacred moment would be a public display of the coming of the Prince of Peace. When Jesus sent two of his disciples to retrieve the colt, they found it just as He said they would. It showed their faith and confidence in the Lord's request. The riding of this colt into Jerusalem would be a fulfillment of the prophecy of how the Messiah would enter Jerusalem.

The faith to take Jesus at His word, and find the situation just as Jesus had told them would be a faith builder. The owners of the colt were just as faithful in their response when they learned that the Lord needed it. No questions or explanations needed - take the colt.

Trusting in Jesus and His word, has helped many of us to realize that the Lord knows just how things are going to turn out. And the fact that He needs something we have should be a great joy and privilege in the sharing and giving.

Too many of us keep things tied up that the Lord could use to carry out His mission. We tie up our blessings whether it be money, time, possessions or talent. If the Lord has need of it - whatever it is - we must let it go cheerfully. What a privilege it is to allow Jesus to use us and all that we have to bring peace, joy, happiness, and hope to others.

The grace of our Lord is not only sufficient enough to save us, but also to put us into His service. So if the Lord asks us to untie our colt, whatever it is, let us cheerfully let it be used in His service.

--Roger Holm (Tijeras, NM)