

Seeds Among Thorns

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Date: 10 April 2022

- [0 : 00] Let us now sing to God's praise from Psalm 49. That's in the Sing Psalms version, page 64, if you're using the Psalter.
- Listen to me, all you peoples, all who in the whole world dwell, low and high, both rich and needy.
- Hear the message I will tell. I will speak with understanding, wisdom from the heart I'll preach.
- I will listen to a proverb, secrets with a harp I'll teach. Why should I fear days of evil when the wicked hem me in?
- Those who boast of their possessions, by their trust and wealth they sin. There is no one who is able to redeem a soul from death.
- [1 : 04] None can pay to God the ransom to prolong another's breath. To redeem a life is costly. None sufficient price can pay. So that one should live a mortal, free forever from decay.
- Let us sing these verses and stand if you can. Listen to me, all you peoples. Listen to me, all you peoples, all who in the whole world dwell, low and high, both rich and needy.
- Hear the message I will tell. I will speak with understanding, wisdom from the heart I'll preach.
- I will listen to a proverb, secrets with the heart I'll teach.
- [2 : 27] Why should I fear days of evil when the wicked hem me in?
- Those who boast of their possessions, by their trust in wealth they sin.
- There is no one who is able to redeem a soul from death.
- None can pay to God their ransom to prolong another's breath.
- To redeem a life is costly. None sufficient price can pay.
- [3 : 35] So that one should live immortal, free forever from decay.
- Let us engage in prayer. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
- Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
- Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. God.
- Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
- [4 : 56] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. for the way in which thy word is used to bring the light of truth into lives that have lived in a twilight world.
- O Lord, we pray this evening as we gather in thy name that we may be in possession of thy truth, that it may be rooted in our hearts and in our lives, that it may be practiced in our daily living, so that our daily living may reflect thy word in our heart, that it may reflect upon the one who gives the word and the one who teaches by his word and the one who uses his word to change and to alter the course of the lives of men and women and boys and girls, so that they look to thee, so that they are prevailed upon to put their trust in the Christ of the cross, the one who came into this world and who died for sinners.

We give thee thanks this evening that he is at thy right hand, a prince and a saviour, and we pray that we might be numbered amongst those who will ultimately be guests at his table at the marriage feast of the Lamb, guests at his table in this life, in the sense that we partake and participate in the gospel feast, but ultimately guests at his table at the marriage supper of the Lamb, from which we need never arise.

O Lord, bless to us our meeting in thy name. Lead us and guide us by thy Spirit, that thy word come with power and conviction to our hearts and minds, and that we may truly know that we are in the presence of Almighty God, that we are in the place where Christ Jesus speaks to our hearts and where he asks us to consider our ways.

Grant thy blessing, we pray thee on each home and family, as we are found in thy presence. Bless those who may be joining the service through the video link.

[7 : 58] Grant thy blessing upon them in the solitude of their homes, those who may be under thine hand in illness, those who may be frail and weak.

We commit to thy care and keeping in the knowledge that thou art the great physician, that thou art the one who can minister to the deep needs of their soul.

and although the outward man may perish, thou art able to renew and restore and refresh and revive and strengthen the inner man.

We pray, O Lord, that thou wouldst do this. Bless the congregation at large as they await the unfolding of thy providence with regard to the proposed meeting to call an assistant among them.

O Lord, grant that thou wouldst be with thy servant who may be placed under call. Grant, O Lord, that thou wouldst give him guidance in these matters as he reflects upon the course and the path that he should follow, that he may do so with a view to thy glory primarily.

[9 : 27] Grant, O Lord, thy blessing on the congregation where he ministers. And although they may be small and few in number, grant encouragement, we pray thee.

Bless thy servant whom thou hast placed over the congregation here. Be with him during a time of vacation. Bless him and refresh him in mind and heart and enable him to return to the congregation refreshed and invigorated for the challenges that belong to the position to which thou hast called.

Bless all who go forth in thy name this day throughout the branch of thy church that we represent in the world and further afield that the cause of Christ may prosper, that souls may be engathered into the kingdom and that thy kingdom should come.

We pray, O Lord, for those who are experiencing hardship and trial and difficulty, particularly as a result of war, we remember those in the Ukraine.

O Lord, be with those who are suffering so much, those who are mourning the loss of loved ones, those who are grieving. Grant, O Lord, the doubt of such evil that good may prevail and that souls may be directed to thyself and come to know and experience the joy of the Lord in their hearts and lives.

[11 : 15] Help us as we turn to thy truth. Lead us and guide us, we pray thee. Cleanse in the blood. In Jesus' name we ask it with forgiveness of sin.

Amen. Amen. Let us now read from the New Testament from the Gospel according to Matthew in chapter 13.

Matthew's Gospel chapter 13. The same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea and great crowds gathered about him so that he got into a boat and sat down and the whole crowd stood on the beach and he told them many things and parables saying, A sower went out to sow and as he sowed some seeds fell along the path and the birds came and devoured them.

Other seeds fell on rocky ground where they did not have much soil and immediately they sprang up since they had no depth of soil but when the sun rose they were scorched and since they had no root they withered away.

Other seeds fell among thorns and the thorns grew up and choked them other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain some a hundred fold some sixty some thirty he who has ears let him hear.

[13 : 09] Then the disciples came and said to him why do you speak to them in parables and he answered them to you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven but to them it has not been given for to the one who has more will be given and he will have an abundance but from the one who has not even what he has will be taken away.

this is why I speak to them in parables because seeing they do not see and hearing they do not hear nor do they understand indeed in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says you will indeed hear but never understand and you will indeed see but never perceive for this people's heart has grown dull and with their ears they can barely hear and their eyes they have closed lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn and I would heal them but blessed are your eyes for they see and your ears for they hear truly I say to you many prophets and righteous people long to see what you see and did not see it and to hear what you hear and did not hear it hear then the parable of the sower when anyone hears the gospel of the kingdom and does not understand it the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart this is what was sown along the path as for what was sown on the rocky ground this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy yet he has no root in himself but endures for a while and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word immediately he falls away as for what was sown among thorns this is the one who hears the word but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word and it proves unfruitful as for what was sown on good soil this is the one who hears the word and understands it he indeed bears fruit and yields in one case a hundredfold in another sixty and in another thirty amen and may

God bless to us that reading from his truth let us further sing to his praise from psalm thirty three this time in the Scottish Psalter at verse thirteen that's on page two four six page two four six of the psalter the Lord from heaven sees and beholds all sons of men full well he views all from his dwelling place that in the earth do dwell forms their hearts alike and all their doings he observes great hosts save not a king much strength no mighty man preserves and horse for preservation is a deceitful thing and by the greatness of his strength can no deliverance bring behold on those that do and fear the

Lord doth set his eye even those who on his mercy do with confidence rely let us sing these verses psalm 33 verse 13 the Lord from heaven sees and beholds all sons of men forward the Lord from heaven sees and beholds all sons of men full well he viewed all from his dwelling place that in the earth to dwell he forms their hearts alike and all their view in he observes great who is there not a king much strength no mighty man he said and whores for preservation is a deceitful thing and by the greatness of his strength can no deliverance bring behold on those that do him fear the lord does set his eye even those who on his mercy do with confidence rely to his life let us now turn to the passage that we read from the gospel according to

Matthew in chapter seven and we may take as our text verse seven other seeds fell among thorns and the thorns grew up and choked them in the chapter of which we read but part Matthew gives us some insight into the method of teaching employed by the Lord Jesus he taught in parables Matthew hasn't recorded many parables up to this point in his gospel but you may remember that at the conclusion of the sermon on the mount Matthew seven he tells the parable of the man who two men one building his house on the sand and the other on the rock and the emphasis on that parable is on those not just to hear the word of

[21 : 46] God but who obey the word of God there is a dual emphasis in telling that parable not just in hearing but in obeying and in this chapter there are at least six parables recorded and from here on to the end of the gospel there are numerous parables recorded by Matthew and that would indicate that at this point Jesus' method of teaching focuses more and more on the usage of parables to communicate his message to some parables may have sounded like unintelligible puzzles to which they didn't have the key and that prompts the question why did he use this method of teaching you could say that he made use of graphic familiar daily scenes to illustrate deep spiritual truths scenes to which his audience could relate scenes which not only would have held their attention but may have remained in retention and could be recalled and yet although all of that could be true you discover that

Jesus spoke in parables with a dual purpose in mind he spoke in parables in order to simultaneously reveal and conceal and conceal his message and that's a strange thing isn't it for any communicator to do perhaps some of us who are or have been in the business of communication feel to our shame that often we conceal more often than we reveal not intentionally but through our abject failure to rightly communicate the message entrusted to us but I think most communicators would want to reveal or communicate their message but the

Lord Jesus by parables intended both to reveal and to conceal his message William Hendrickson commentator makes the observation Jesus now more than ever before begins to speak in parables in order to further reveal the truth to those who accepted the mysterious but to conceal it from those who rejected the obvious and that is precisely what he does in this passage parables all of which center around the theme of the kingdom of God or as Matthew usually calls it the kingdom of heaven that's the kingdom which the

Messiah of Israel would establish now you remember that the Israelites had a definite conception conception of what the kingdom would be like and they also had a conception of what the king would be like that is the Messiah they believed that when the Messiah came that there would be a great conversion not only of the people of Israel who were apathetic towards God but even of the Gentiles the Israelites expected that when the Messiah came he would set up a kingdom which all of Israel would be converted into the true faith in God and the Gentiles would stream into Jerusalem and worship him they believed that the Messiah would get rid of the

Roman power that lorded it over them and establish a land ruled by the law of God he would reign in justice and righteousness there would be a great and glorious kingdom just like in the days of King David and King Solomon and the result of that was that people like the Pharisees and many others were asking of Jesus when the kingdom of God would come it was a question that was frequently in their minds and on their lips and when they addressed that question to the Lord Jesus the response disappointed them because you remember Jesus stated the kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed nor will they say look here it is or there it will not come in the way in which people expect they obviously thought that it would be accompanied by some kind of publicity and fanfare that often accompanies earthly kingdoms or maybe they thought there would be supernatural signs that they could observe and so predict the future as determined by

[27 : 59] God and they thought surely this teacher could tell them perhaps from prophecy when the kingdom would be set up and Jesus seeks to correct their view the Roman power was not going to be overthrown at least not in the way they anticipated nor would Israel be vindicated nor would an earthly kingdom be established and just as the people had a misconception about what the Messiah would be like and what would follow they had a misconception of what the kingdom would be like and it's interesting that in each of the parables in this chapter Jesus is correcting a popular misunderstanding of his kingdom that was held by the people to whom he spoke and even his own disciples in these parables about the kingdom he teaches us things about the king and also about the true nature of the kingdom well the parable before us this evening that we have read about mainly is the parable known as the parable of the sower and

I want to focus on one particular group of soil seeds fell among thorns and I'd like to highlight four thoughts first of all the problem that is identified secondly the prevention of fruit thirdly the power of the thorns and finally the pesticide required to destroy the thorns firstly then the problem identified and the problem put simply is this lack of fruit fruit bearing made the difference between the various types of soil upon which the sower scattered a seed you wouldn't have known that if we were not told of the failure or the success of the seed we do not know our own hearts for example until we see our attitude towards the gospel of

Jesus Christ if the message of the gospel produces in my life or yours a desire for holiness of life and love to God and humanity then you know that there is good soil in your heart but if you are merely an attender but not obedient in heart then you know that the ground of your heart is hard or stony or full of thorns the word of the Lord it tries our hearts and in this it is like a fire which distinguishes between metal and dross I suppose often we tend when we attend a service to judge the preacher but we forget that a greater than the preacher will sit in judgment on us the word itself will judge us our own condition will be brought out clearly by the way in which we deal with the message of the gospel whether we receive or refuse the gospel of

Jesus Christ if we bring forth fruit to the praise of God's grace it is good and that is what is set before us in the parable about the good soil but if not however attentively we may appear to hear however much we may retain in our memories what we have heard if it doesn't produce any saving effect on our souls we know that the soil of our heart has not been prepared by the Lord and remains in its sinful natural unproductive barrenness so let me just put a personal question here what fruit have you borne up until now from all the times that you have heard the message of the gospel you know

I'm sure most of you have been hearers from your childhood from your earliest years is there fruit bearing in your life or a long list of sermons you must have heard by now over all the years that you have attended in this very building count the number of Sundays that you have sat in this building think of the different ministers you have heard preaching from this pulpit some no longer in this life remember the effect that some of these sermons had on you and if you have not been saved now here's a very pointed question do you think you will ever be saved if there is no holiness in your life do you think that there will be holiness in your life because you see all of us will have much to answer for in the great day when the servants of

[34 : 27] God give their accounts and shall have no joy when they come to mention those who sat under the ministry of the gospel but who did not believe or receive the message of the gospel how will you excuse yourself before God and you know you may not believe it but every hearer who sits under the message of the gospel who does not give any indication of believing the message is a source of huge disappointment to those who proclaim the message you have no idea how many tears your lives occasion you have no idea the distress that is caused the inward searching that it produces in the lives of those who proclaim the message regard to those who come and to go and to come yet again and appear unchanged but it is not the hard hearted hearer as typified by the seeds that fell on the path or the impetuous hearer typified by the seeds that fell on rocky ground that I wish to address this evening but those who hear the word attentively and who in a sense receive it into your heart and understanding so that there is a certain growth of seed in your life but it never comes to fruition there is a very peculiar sense and a real sense in which you are a religious person you are under the influence of godliness you exhibit plenty of leaf but there is no corn in the years and you know the sower in the literal sense whether a crafter or a farmer is looking for a harvest without the growth of grain on the stalks there is no fruit there is no harvest to be cut and

Jesus as the sower or his representative is also looking for fruit when it comes to your response to the seed of the word to the seed of the gospel sown into your hearts he is looking for fruit nothing else matters good fruit is the only evidence that the seed of the word has not been wasted when it was sown into the soil of our hearts he is looking for a harvest of Christ likeness a yield of godliness a transformation of life in short he is looking for the fruit of the spirit which is love joy peace patience kindness goodness faithfulness gentleness self control these are the marks that the word of Christ is doing it's work within your heart and nothing less than that will do see that's the that's the underlying emphasis of the message he insists on the vital importance of bearing fruit the absolute necessity of spiritual fruitfulness in our lives and in many ways this parable may not appear so on the surface but it is most searching it scrutinizes our lives as hearers and how we deal with the seed of the word of

God because one day we will have to stand before God do you think that you can stand before him on the last day without holiness without repentance being ever in your life without a love for his people and his praise without humility without devotion to the word and love to Christ see these are the things that ought to be at the forefront of our mind when we are challenged by this kind of parable can we come before him having spent our days without any true spiritual concern you know you may point to the fact that you were baptized as an infant you may point to your catalog of good deeds your generosity and your contributions to various charities but these are no substitutes for the good fruit of heart holiness and there is no one and this is what the word of God says there is no one welcomed into the glory that is to come who has failed to bear this fruit in this life strive says the writer to the

Hebrews for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord now the great disappointment for the sower concerning the seed that was sown among the thorns is its lack of fruit what will the Lord of the harvest say about the seed of the word and what it has done in the soil of your heart and mine when the resurrection morning dawns will there be fruit will there be fruit will there be Christ likeness is there a growing in holiness hatred for sin a desire to serve the Lord a love for his praise and his people the vital importance the absolute necessity of bearing fruit why was there no fruit in this area and the answer the

Bible gives it fell among thorns the implication is that the thorns or the seeds of the thorns were in the ground the sower didn't fling the seeds into a patch of thorns that was already visible you know one of the benefits of retirement and still having a reasonable measure of health is to be able to do things that you never may have done until you retire and one thing I have done in my retirement is to sow oats and barley the ground was ploughed and harrowed and it looked so inviting for the seed and as I went up and down the area that had been prepared with my pail of seed flinging a handful here and there

[42 : 35] I hope and not a too amateurish fashion this parable was greatly on my mind I was seeing it from the point of view of the sower in the literal sense as I scattered the seed of the oats and the barley I trust I had seen it from a spiritual point of view because of my vocation over many years and when these seeds germinated and sprouted initially it was almost like a coating of green sprayed on the ground and then you began to see other things raise their head and in the area where we plant these seeds there is a weed that constantly raises its head you would never know it was there until growth begins and

I know the Gaelic name for the weed but I think the English name is charlotte it has a yellow flower and in my own mind it is symbolic of the thorns which are innate in all our hearts the only difference being it is relatively easy to pull out this weed from the soil if it is in a potato patch if it is in a patch where you've planted barley and oats that's a different matter altogether and you know the thorns in our hearts may not be evident from without but they are there in all of our hearts waiting to do their work so the problem identified is this lack of fruit and that brings me to the second point the prevention of fruit why was there no fruit born from the seeds in this instance well verse 22 also helps us to address this question remember this is

Jesus own interpretation tells us what happened to the seed sown among thorns as for what was sown among thorns this is the one who hears the word but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choked the word and it proves unfruitful and by comparing the gospel accounts Matthew Mark and Luke you discover that there are another two types of thorns mentioned in Mark's gospel in chapter four but the cares of the world the deceitfulness of riches and the desire for other things enter in and choke the word and it proves unfruitful in Luke's account there are those who hear but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life and their fruit does not mature so from the comparison of accounts we note that there are four types of heart weeds or thorns which grow up and choke the word in our lives as every keen gardener knows good plants never seem to grow as fast as weeds sometimes it's a heartache isn't it if you if you're into gardening and you've just put down new plants or you've been cultivating it and then you go out a day or two later and you see the weeds that you thought you had uprooted raising their heads again or if you are cutting your lawn and it's got a lot of daisies in it and you think you've done away with them using them more and then you go out again and they've raised their head and so here the four types of thorns that are mentioned the cares of the world the deceitfulness of riches desire for other things and the pleasures of life and let's just take a moment or two to reflect on each of these first of all the cares of the world you know how how preoccupied and easily distracted we can become and it seems to me that nothing can crush gospel life quite like the choking power of worldly care very often these cares are legitimate we can spend so much time worrying about so many different things in life and someone made this observation and I like the way they expressed it the way you know the difference between wise and appropriate concern for daily necessities and truly ungodly care is when you find you cannot trust

Jesus with what you cannot control you cannot trust Jesus with what you cannot control
ungodly worldly care is when you cannot trust Jesus with what you cannot control you
cannot be at peace or rest in his wise ordering of your today or your tomorrow you have to
wrestle with it constantly in your mind you can't put it down you can't still your heart in the
knowledge of resting in the promises of Christ and you can be distracted by endless
opportunities for immediate gratification maybe turn on the telly instead of opening the
Bible go on to the internet instead of meaningful conversation with a

Christian friend you know we can make time for everything else except developing a
deeper relationship with Jesus Christ what is happening the cares of the world are trying
to choke choke and crush the seed of the word and so the motto here is this beware the
heartthorn of the cares of this world then there is the deceitfulness of riches notice
carefully what is said the Lord does not highlight in merely the possession of riches but the
deceitfulness of them and there is implied in that word the cunning and deluding power of
riches the seductive power or the magnetic power of riches is strong riches are deceptive
and in effect what has been said here money is a liar money is a liar of riches tell lies
because riches tries to tell you that it can save you all your wants all your needs all your
fears will be addressed if you just had a little bit more and it wants you to believe that
you've got to have more no matter how much you got and I say again money is a liar and
if you let it those lies will choke the seed of the word remember what the

[50 : 40] Lord said you cannot serve both God and money why because money has the power to
dominate our hearts we've become slaves to material possessions if you let it the heart
thorn or the heart weed of the deceitful of riches will choke out the call of Christ to a life of
sacrifice and service to a life of godliness and purity it will choke the word so you have to
make a choice our hearts have only the capacity for one dominating love that affection
and that affection alone is what we will serve and money our riches wants to enslave us
it's constantly lying to us and saying trust me I'm the thing you need most I'll rescue you I'll
bring you all you need in life and you know the sad thing is that millions believe the
duplicity of riches that's why

I believe they religiously buy their lottery ticket every week in the hope their number will
come up that it will bring them what they want believe me it's a huge lie it's a huge lie so
that's the second thorn the cares of the world the deceitfulness of riches the desire for
other things is the third one mentioned from Mark's gospel the word Mark uses the Greek
word *epithumia* you could translate it lust it means an inordinate longing for what you do
not have and I suppose you could term it like this covetousness greed it's the enemy of
godliness with contentment which is great gain to which every believer is called remember
what the

Lord said a man's life doesn't consist in the abundance of things inordinate desire the lust
of the eyes and the lust of the flesh can crush the seed of the word it's a covetous spirit
that's a third thorn and the fourth one is the pleasures of life as termed by Luke no they
may not necessarily be sinful things in themselves pleasure let's not forget is a gift of God
who gives us all things richly to enjoy but when worldly or the pleasures of this life become
an end in themselves when pleasures become the reason for life the chief agenda of your
heart it will choke the word no one ever denied himself or herself and took up the cross no
one ever put to death his sinful nature with his passion and desires while at the same time
making the pleasures of life the great priority for your daily agenda the heart thorn of the
pleasures of life so the prevention of fruit the different types of thorns the problem
identified the lack of fruit and did you notice what

Matthew says those thorns do that brings me to my third point the power of the thorns look at verse 22 again in chapter 13 as for what was sown among thorns this is the one who hears the word but the cares of the world the deceitfulness of riches choke the word and it proves unfruitful to choke the word implies the idea of crowding out the word and I think that's important because it tells us what Jesus is not saying he isn't saying if you ever feel any of these things in your heart then the seed of the word has been choked and you are doomed to a fruitless life that's not the message in fact if the truth is told there is no one here who doesn't feel the pull and the seductive power of all of these thorns from time to time the cares of the world the deceitfulness of riches side for other things and the pleasure we have all these you only have to go back to the genesis narrative to the fall of man since our first parents ate of the forbidden fruit and lost communion with

God what is true there has never been a heart or a plot of ground that was not doomed to produce thorns and thistles true metaphorically for the ground of the human heart as much as it is for the literal ground that you use in your garden or on your craft and what's more in the parable that Jesus tells us the thorns and the thistles are regularly found in the soil did you note that you know no one puts the weeds or the thorns into our hearts we were born no matter how innocent you may have looked as an infant we were born with them already planted there prophet jeremiah the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick who can understand it the book of genesis we are told of the state of the heart pre-flood it hasn't changed post-flood every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually the psalmist and the great penitential psalm as he is seeking the forgiveness of god comes to acknowledge

[57 : 31] I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me the weeds were already growing in the fertile soil of our hearts from the very beginning we are sinners by nature no one ever needed to teach us about the cares of the world or the deceitfulness of riches or the desire for other things or for the pleasures of life we have come into the world with hearts conditioned to pursue these things so the issue is not simply the mere presence of the thoughts the issue is a heart that is crowded with them so that the seed is not allowed to get place in the heart so crowded with these thorns that the seed is crowded out what needs to be done to keep the thorns at bay that ought to be the pressing question what can be done if they're endemic in the soil of our hearts if our part of behavior by nature is to run after us how do we prevent the heart weeds from choking out the word that brings me to my final point the problem the power of the thorns they crowd out the seed of the word the prevention of the fruit the different types of thorns the problem identified the lack of fruit the pesticide required in big farming operations the crops are sprayed with pesticides to keep the weeds at bay and the only effective pesticide for me and you is the word of the living

God may sound paradoxical but it's the word of the living God that can conquer the thorns that grow in our hearts and that means that the seed must continue to be sown in order that our heart holds on to God's word that we read it regularly that we believe what it says about sin and salvation and living in obedience to its command do you remember how the gospel writer Luke summarizes the good soil are those who hear in the word hold it fast in an honest and good heart and bear fruit with patience in other words made good by the grace of God continue to persevere in the knowledge that God works all things for good so for us to have the thorns uprooted to have the thorns die and wither need to come before

God and ask him to create a clean heart in my life and yours to let the power of the truth loose in our lives not to shut it out not to let these thorns prevent it from operating but to let the power of the truth work in our lives that we may be brought into subjection to the great sower of the seed the one who blesses and brings joy into joyless lives the problem identified the prevention of fruit the power of the thorns the pesticide required let us pray oh eternal God help us to give attention to the warnings of thy word they are very serious warnings they are meant to make us stop and think meant to make us examine our lives in the light of the truth to ask ourselves searching questions and to ask why the good seed is not productive in our hearts and in our lives oh grant the grace that it may indeed bear fruit to the glory of thy great name and the glory shall be thine in Jesus name we ask it amen let us conclude by singing to

God's praise from Psalm 126 in the Sing Psalms version page 171 Psalm 126 page 171 when Zion's fortunes God restored it was as a dream come true our mouths were then with laughter filled our tongues with songs anew and in many ways that is symbolic and illustrative of what takes place in the lives of men and women and boys and girls when they are brought into union by faith with Christ the nation said the Lord has done great things for Israel the Lord did mighty things for us enjoy our hearts new well restore our fortunes gracious

Lord like streams and desert soil a joyful harvest will reward the weeping sower the man who bearing seed to sow goes out with tears of grief will come again with songs of joy bearing his harvest sheaf let us sing these verses when Zion's fortunes God restored when Zion's fortunes got restored it was a dream come true our mouths were then laid laughter filled our tongues with songs anew the nation said the Lord has done great things for Israel for Israel the Lord in mighty things for us and joy and hearts new well restore our fortunes gracious for like streams in desert soil a joyful harvest will reward the weeping sower the man who really say to sow goes out with tears of grief will come again with songs of joy bearing his heart bless thee now may the grace of the

[66 : 18] Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit rest on and abide with you all now and forever Amen da a poz THERE ANYRO nac HAL thunder spell thy our