

Deception

“And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it. ... And as for what fell among the thorns, they 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. ... Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away.”

Luke 8:7, 14, 18.

Jesus regularly warns disciples not to be deceived into thinking they're Christians when they're not Christians. For example, in the parable of the talents, the one talent man who hides his talent is a worker for the master, not an enemy. Or the servant who is forgiven a great debt but refuses to forgive a smaller debt is someone who is forgiven, not someone lost in their sin. It is a common theme in the ministry of Jesus because we are regularly deceived into thinking we are in good standing with God when we're not. Jesus, once again, expresses this very clearly in the parable of the sower and the seeds.

There are a few things we learn about the nature of deception through this parable. First, in verse seven, the thorns grow up with the seed. The thorns are not rooted out but are left in place to continue to grow. Interestingly, though, the seed does grow for a period of time. Part of the nature of deception is that the deceived must think it's doing something it's not, and in order to think this at first, the deceived is allowed to accomplish this. So the seed grows for a period of time, but the thorns grow along side of it, bidding its time.

Second, in verse fourteen, the thorns choke the seed so that it does not mature. By allowing the seed to grow without experiencing maturity, the soil is deceived into thinking that there is progress. Because there is some progress. But the progress remains unfinished and immature. The cares and riches and pleasures of life grow alongside the seed and choke it out before the seed can bear any fruit.

Third, in verse eighteen, the thorns deceive the soil into thinking the seed is alive when it's dead. By allowing the fruit to grow without maturing, a kind of *good enough* mindset blossoms and the soil rests on its laurels, not realizing that the point of seed is to bear fruit. To plant a seed without bearing fruit is akin to running a race without crossing the finish line – as if the first ten meters of a hundred meter dash were *good enough*. And so the fruit grows and dies without knowing it's dead because of the poison of *good enough* which has allowed the seed to rejoice in the thorns while assuming it's growing when it stopped growing long ago. Jesus rightly warns us, *He who has ears to hear, let him hear.*

[DJR]