(40) Live,Give**, Grow**, Go **GROW: Without Choking**

**Matthew 13:7**

Others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out.

**Matthew 13:22**

And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

* **My struggle with Luke 14 over the years...(and passages like it)**

**Luke 14:33-35**

**33 So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions. 34**“Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned? **35**It is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

* My questions and mental processes usually sought to come to grips of how Jesus could not literally mean that for all disciples...
  + His disciples struggled in the same way
  + It simply did not make sense in their world (or ours)

**Luke 18:24-26**

And Jesus looked at him and said, **“How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the Kingdom of God!**  For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” They who heard it said, **“Then who can be saved?”**

* + I’ve had people say*,*
    - *“Ah, but 18:27 says ‘With Man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible…’”*
      * But does this mean a materialistic man can still slip in the pearly gates?
      * Or does it mean that God can change or our hearts, even in a world so thoroughly given to Mammon? Greed? Material Possessions?
      * Surely all the other teachings of Jesus and the Apostles point to the latter!
  + **First, I must question My approach – where my head (and heart) are…**
    - Most any other context that Jesus would say – *“this things make’s it pretty much impossible to be saved…”* – We would avoid like the plague…
    - But like the disciples – our world, our lives, our thinking, our ambition, is all so inundated with going after wealth, it seems impossible to expect any other way to live…and so we too are confused.
    - And, yet I do see that there were (and are) God-fearing men and women who have wealth and use it to the glory of God – and are not the least consumed by it.

* + - And that there are passages that instruct “the rich” how to use their wealth for the kingdom of God.

**So, why would he say it that way?**

The Worry (Cares) of the World...

* **Keeps Us Focused on the Wrong Things – Temporary Things**

**Eccl. 5:12** The hardworking man, even with little, sleeps well; but the rich toss and turn all night long.

The Deceitfulness of Wealth

**1 Timothy 6:17-19**

“Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share…so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.

**Slowly convinces us that:**

1. We are in Charge of Our Destiny
2. That Our Hard Work and Cleverness is the Source of Hope
3. Ultimately – That We Are God

**Deuteronomy 8:11-17**

“For the Lord is bringing you into a good land…a land where you will eat food without scarcity, in which you will not lack anything…and when you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land which He as given you. **Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God**…otherwise when you have eaten and are satisfied, and have built good houses and lived in them…and when all that you have has multiplied…**then your heart will become proud…and you forget…**Otherwise you say in your heart, **‘My power and my strength made me this wealth.’”**

The Word is Present...but Unfruitful

* These worries and lies – control our lives, thoughts, and actions
* Chokes out:
  + Sensitivity to the Spirit
  + Significant Spiritual Growth
  + Spirit-produced Fruit

**1 Timothy 6:9-11**

**9**But those who want to get rich **fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.** **10**For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. **11 But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance *and* gentleness.**