

THE FIELD OF THE SLOTHFUL

PROVERBS 24:30-32

Text:

Introduction:

No doubt Solomon at times was glad to lay aside the stately robes, escape from the rituals of royalty, and go through the country unknown.

On one occasion, when he was doing so, he observed the fields of two farmers.

These fields were grown over with thorns and nettles and the wall was broken down.

One glance showed him that it was owned by slothful sluggards, who neglected it.

From this Solomon gathered instruction.

Note:

Men generally learn wisdom if they have wisdom.

We may find instruction everywhere. To a spiritual mind nettles have their use, and weeds have their doctrine.

Are not all thorns and thistles meant to be teachers?

They came about as a result of sin and they show us what sin has done, and the kind of produce that will come when we sow the seed of rebellion against God?

Solomon said that he “Saw and considered it well” and that he “received instruction.”

Whatever you see, take care to consider it well, and you will not see it in vain.

You can find means of instruction everywhere, in the land and in the sea, in the earth and in the skies, you can learn from every living beast, bird, fish, and insect, as well as from every useful or useless plant that springs out of the ground.

No doubt Solomon was not impressed by the slothfulness of this farmer and the thorn and nettled covered fields but he nonetheless he found instruction from them.

Thought

Many have been hurt by briars, but few are improved by them.

Notice the lessons that can be learned from the field of the slothful.

1. THE CONDITION OF THE FIELD

The field was in miserable condition.

A. It's Protection Was Broken Down

This slothful farmer lets his wall fall.

His property lies open to the thief and the destroyer.

The wild boar will root up the vines, and other varmints and animals will destroy the crop if one was there.

If we are not watchful and careful, evil will creep in from without and spoil our work, our home, and our soul.

B. It's Potential Was Badly Debilitated

Remember:

This field is overgrown with thorns and nettles.

Land left to its self will still produce – but that which is produced is not useful.

Weeds grown on neglected land.

Remember:

If we fail to do our duty, or fail to be faithful it is certain the weeds of mischief will follow.

If we neglect the field of our homes and the vineyard of our family the nettles of evil will grow in the minds of our children, and the results this this will be the string and hurt of the briars because of our neglect.

Illustration: Eli

1 Samuel 2:12-17

¹² Now the sons of Eli *were* sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD. ¹³ And the priests' custom with the people *was, that*, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand; ¹⁴ And he struck *it* into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither. ¹⁵ Also before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw. ¹⁶ And *if* any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and *then* take *as much* as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, *Nay*; but thou shalt give *it me* now: and if not, I will take *it* by force. ¹⁷ Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD.

1 Samuel 2:27-36

²⁷ And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house? ²⁸ And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel *to be* my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel? ²⁹ Wherefore kick ye at my

sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded *in my* habitation; and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people? ³⁰ Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed *that* thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. ³¹ Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house. ³² And thou shalt see an enemy *in my* habitation, in all *the wealth* which *God* shall give Israel: and there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever. ³³ And the man of thine, *whom* I shall not cut off from mine altar, *shall be* to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart: and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age. ³⁴ And this *shall be* a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them. ³⁵ And I will raise me up a faithful priest, *that* shall do according to *that* which *is* in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever. ³⁶ And it shall come to pass, *that* every one that is left in thine house shall come *and* crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread.

If we fail to cultivate the gardens of our own souls, the weeds, nettles and briars will certainly grow there and bear their poisonous fruits.

2. THE CAUSE FOR THE FIELDS CONDITION

A. The owner is slothful.

His sin is slothfulness, complacency, and indifference.

He commits no offence. Yet he is ruined.

We may be undone by simple omission without any transgression.

His sin is in delaying to do his duty.

Remember:

We own duties to time.

Ephesians 5:16

¹⁶ Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Colossians 4:5

⁵ Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

We don't have unlimited time or opportunities before us.

Remember:

Today's neglected task cannot be performed tomorrow without hindering tomorrow's work.

Illustration: Ten Foolish Virgin

They failed by being slothful, complacent and indifferent.

B. The Owner is Self-Indulgent

The sluggard enjoys his sleep.

Selfishness is the root of idleness.

Quote:

One doesn't know how the fresh morning glides away while he lies with his eyes closed in selfish sleep.

The slumber of the soul that neglects the call to its highest duty is selfish sleep.

C. The Owner is Silly

The sleep is a poor compensation for poverty and shame.

3. THE CONSEQUENCES OF SLOTHFULNESS

A. Ruin

Poverty comes on the slothful man as a natural punishment.

B. Reproach

All who pass by understand his character, or lack thereof.

He is known as a sluggard, who is slothful.

4. THE COUNSEL FROM THE OBSERVATION

- Unaided or Unattended nature will always produce thorns and nettles, but nothing else.
- Good intentions are not enough.

Quote:

Most never mean to dream while sleeping so long.

Our duty is to 'awake from sleep' and to 'stir up the gift that is within us' 'working out our salvation' to be 'a good husbandmen', 'a good and faithful servants.'

Close:

The scene before us is the field of the sluggard who is sleeping while everything is going wrong.

Instead of the flower – there are thorns.

The ground is covered with only weeds – nettles, and thorns.

The wall is broken down.

Where should be beauty – is unsightliness.

Where should be fruitfulness – is barrenness.

Ruin is written on everything, everywhere.

Negligence, half-heartedness in any area results in decay, breakdown, and ruin.

Poverty is on its way and will certainly be knocking at the door, and want will present itself with a force that cannot be resisted.

May we see and consider it well and receive the instruction from the sluggard and slothful.