



# The Parable of the Sower

Mark 4:1-20



Jesus teaches from the boat

Mark 4:1



Again Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water's edge. <sup>2</sup> He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said: <sup>3</sup> "Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. <sup>4</sup> As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. <sup>5</sup> Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. <sup>6</sup> But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. <sup>7</sup> Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. <sup>8</sup> Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times."

## The Parable

Mark 4:1-8

<sup>9</sup> Then Jesus said, “Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.”  
<sup>10</sup> When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. <sup>11</sup> He told them, “The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables <sup>12</sup> so that, “they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!”<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Then Jesus said to them, “Don’t you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable?”



## The question

Mark 4:9-13



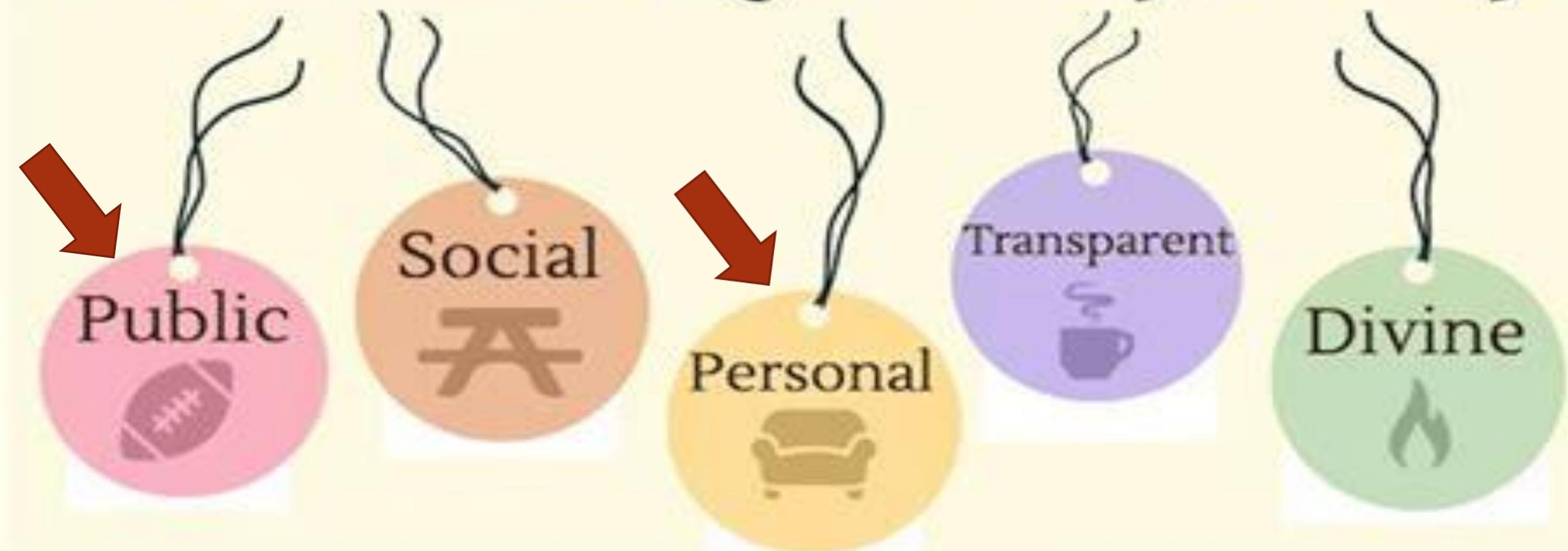
<sup>14</sup>The farmer sows the word. <sup>15</sup>Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. <sup>16</sup>Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. <sup>17</sup>But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. <sup>18</sup>Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; <sup>19</sup>but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. <sup>20</sup>Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.”

## The Explanation

Mark 4:14-20

*The*

# *5 Contexts of Discipleship*





A parable is, literally, something “cast alongside” something else. Jesus’ parables were stories that were “cast alongside” a truth in order to illustrate that truth. His parables were teaching aids and can be thought of as extended analogies or inspired comparisons. A common description of a parable is that it is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.

**1 Corinthians 2:14** <sup>14</sup>The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.

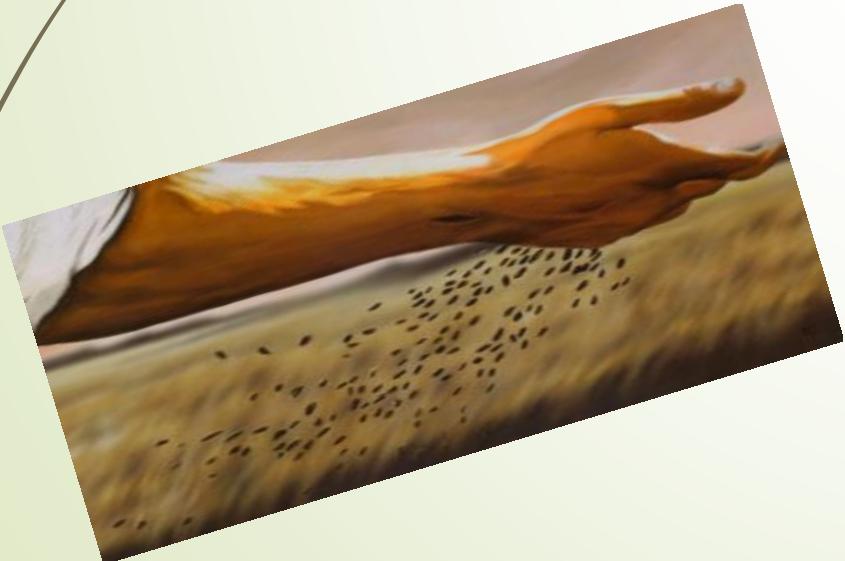
## What is a parable?



This parable addresses two callings on our lives:

## **1. To be sowers of seed**

2. To be fruitful





Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed.  
We are called to be sowers !!

Mark 1:2



What is in your bag of seed?  
How do we keep it full?

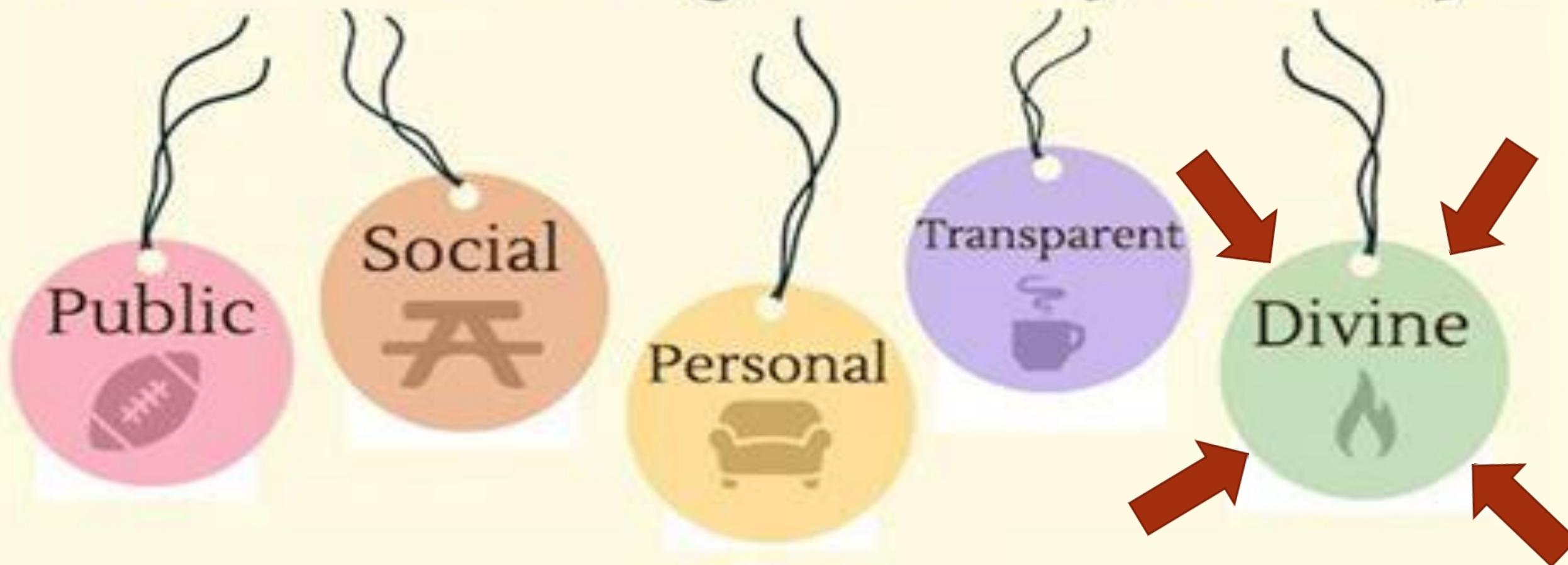


# Spurgeon

► Now the preacher of the Gospel is like the sower, he does not make the seed. The seed is given to him by his master. It would not be possible for man to make the smallest amount of seed which would germinate in the earth – much less heavenly seed of eternal life

*The*

# *5 Contexts of Discipleship*





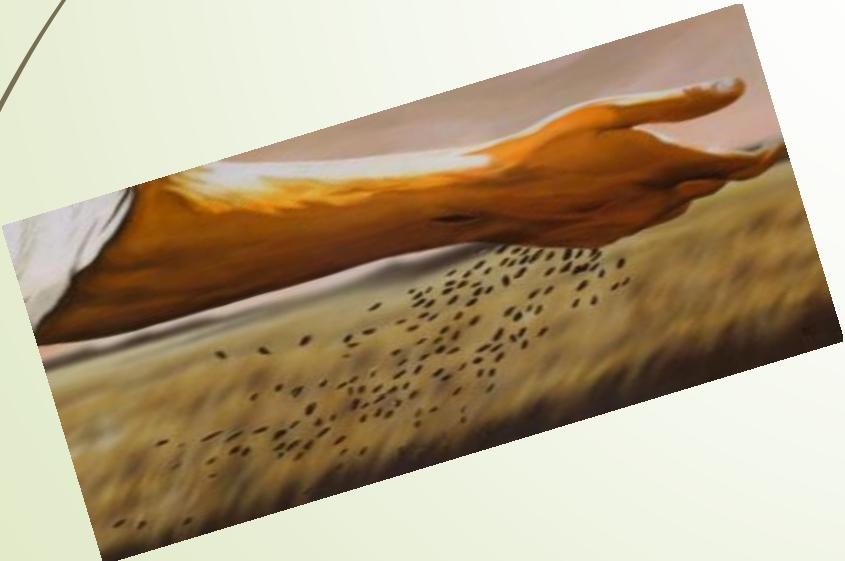
Mark 4  
Where do we sow?



This parable addresses two callings on our lives:

1. To be sowers of seed

**2. To be fruitful**



## We are called to be fruitful

- ▶ **1 Peter 2:9, NKJV** But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light;
- ▶ **John (NIV)**  
16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.



“

The word “Karpos”, used here for fruit is the same as that used in Gal 5:22 when introducing the fruits of the Spirit.

Love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control

”

What does it mean “to be fruitful?”

## The Vine and the Branches

**15** “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. **2** He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes<sup>a</sup> so that it will be even more fruitful. **3** You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. **4** Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

**5** “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. **6** If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. **7** If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. **8** This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

God has sown his word into us and it is his intent that we bear fruit for him and his kingdom. We can only do this if we remain in him. I sometimes fear that God takes this far more seriously than we do.

## The weeds and thorns

<sup>19</sup> but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful

### Proverbs 3:5-6

<sup>5</sup> Trust in the LORD with all your heart  
and lean not on your own understanding;  
<sup>6</sup> in all your ways submit to him,  
and he will make your paths straight.<sup>[a]</sup>

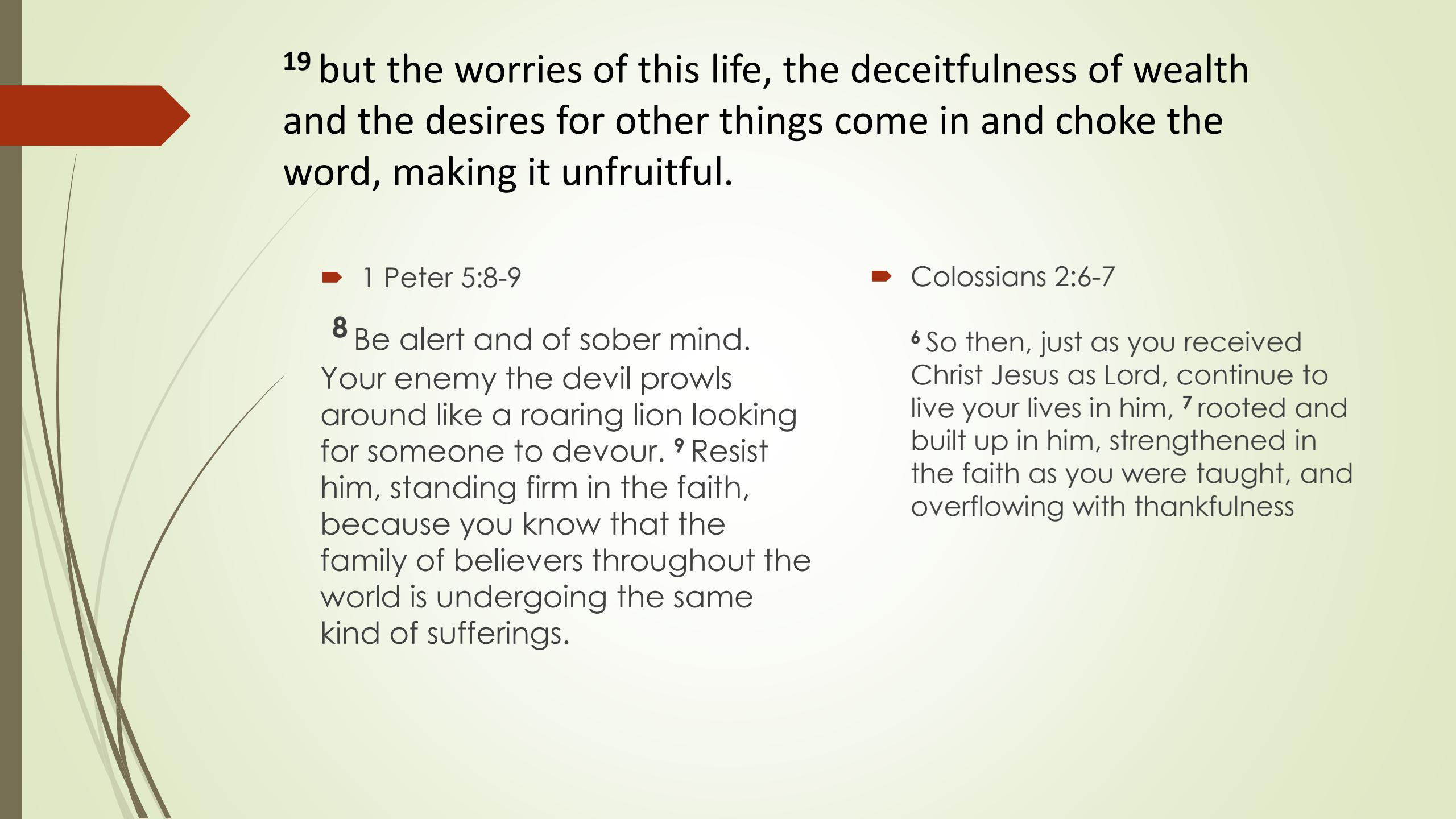




**19** but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.

When Mary complained that her sister Martha was not helping her serve their guests, Jesus doesn't back her up but instead said "you are worried and upset about many things, **42** but few things are needed.

The word he uses here for worries, "merimna" is the same word he uses for worries in this parable. It is everyday problems which can steal our fruitfulness.



**19** but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.

► 1 Peter 5:8-9

**8** Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. **9** Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

► Colossians 2:6-7

**6** So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, **7** rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness

## We are called to be fruitful

- ▶ **1 Peter 2:9, NKJV** But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light;
- ▶ **John (NIV)**  
16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.

