

Thorns, Helmets, Grace and Power

How do you become powerful in the strength of the Lord? Certainly we are commanded to do the Work of the Father but when I started, I discovered we have an enemy that does not want us to continue. What then are we to do to become a vessel for God service? How can we become able to be qualified to be placed on a lampstand for the world to see the Glory of God? I am referring to Mark 4:21 that states if we bear fruit we will be placed on a lampstand for the world to see God's Strength, Provision and Love for mankind. So how do we become able to bear this fruit or to be an example for the world to see? Well it will not be in our own strength because in Acts 1:8 Jesus says; *"But you shall receive power (ability, efficiency, and might) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the ends (the very bounds) of the earth."*

Ok, so we are to receive the Power of the Holy Spirit to be enabled to be a witness that can be placed on a lampstand but why don't we see more examples of this Holy Spirit Power in the lives of Christians today?

Let's reflect on Mark 4:7, 19 since it shows what blocks this Power on our lives. *"⁷ Other seed [of the same kind] fell among thorn plants, and the thistles grew and pressed together and utterly choked and suffocated it, and it yielded no grain."* This information is then further explained by Jesus in verse *"¹⁹ Then the cares and anxieties of the world and distractions of the age, and the pleasure and delight and false glamour and deceitfulness of riches, and the craving and passionate desire for other things creep in and choke and suffocate the Word, and it becomes fruitless."*

Clearly we see thorns or thistles are used as examples of cares, fear, pressures and distractions, so we can now interchange them in other parts of the Bible to expand our understanding even more. Let's look at these cares of the world that satan uses to steal our faith/harvest and block our Holy Spirit's power access. Let's also look at what we are to do when we find ourselves in these cares of the world? The Apostle Peter says: *"The casting our cares onto Him for He cares for us."* (1 Peter 5:7) How we cast these cares in our daily lives is to stop satan from directing what we think. We replace them, by rejecting these thorns or thoughts of cares, fears, pressures and distractions with what has been Promised by God in His Word. This is the replacing of satan's thorns according to what God's Word says or refusing what satan is using to make us powerless or fruitless. This is the transformation of the "Logos" or the written Word of God into the "Rhema", the spoken Word of God (in faith) or Sword of the Spirit.

Let's expand this statement a bit more about the Sword of the Spirit and casting your cares unto Him. The Word says in "Ephesians 6:17" *And take the helmet of salvation and the sword that the Spirit wields, which is the Word of God."* Look how it orders the protective coverings for us. First it says the Helmet of Salvation and then the Sword of the Spirit. Now when you read this verse remember that Jesus bore a crown of thorns on His head when He was on the cross to pay the price for us to be free. (Matthew 27:29) To repeat, Jesus bore our thorns (cares, fears, pressures, distractions) so we could be freed with God's Promise of protection and provision. This is not to be taken lightly!

What are some examples of these thorns that penetrate the skull and cause such pain?

1. Genesis 3:18 These thorns first entered mankind's or Adam's life the moment he fell under the curse or satan as his source. *"Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth for you, and you shall eat the plants of the field."*
2. The Words to Joshua in Numbers 3:55 *"But if you will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then those you let remain of them shall be as pricks in your eyes and as thorns in your sides, and they shall vex you in the land in which you dwell."* I see this as a warning to live pure and without compromise.
3. The type of soil in Mark 4:19 that is fruitless *"Then the cares and anxieties of the world and distractions of the age, and the pleasure and delight and false glamour and deceitfulness of riches, and the craving and passionate desire for other things creep in and choke and suffocate the Word, and it becomes fruitless."*
4. Now read slowly the words Paul recorded in Romans 8:5-7, *⁵For those who are according to the flesh and are controlled by its unholy desires set their minds on and pursue those things which gratify the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit and are controlled by the desires of the Spirit set their minds on and seek those things which gratify the [Holy] Spirit. ⁶Now the mind of the flesh [which is sense and reason without the Holy Spirit] is death [death that comprises all the miseries arising from sin, both here and hereafter]. But the mind of the [Holy] Spirit is life and [soul] peace*

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[both now and forever]. ⁷ [That is] because the mind of the flesh [with its carnal thoughts and purposes] is hostile to God, for it does not submit itself to God's Law (Word); indeed it cannot. What we submit our mind to is what we receive!

I remember when I worked in the desert I would often receive the bite of a thorn that burned when it broke the skin. When one entered you with its poison you were required to stop and wash away the venom that was left from its contact. When it comes to the pricks of satan's thorns in our mind, the same is required and this cleansing is the washing of our thoughts with the Word of God. When you apply a Bible (or Word) Promise that directly contradicts what satan is saying to you, you are standing on this Word which opens the door for the Holy Spirit to empower your faith walk. This is what Jesus did when He was tested and you can get the same results in your life.

When Jesus heard satan's lie/thorn/ mental poison:

1. He answered "It is written" with the verse (Promise) attached that supported this statement or need. (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10) Take notice, satan did not leave after the first question BUT he did leave in the end!
2. After a time of testing, Jesus, being unwavering from the Word, saw satan flee from Him. (Matthew 4:11)
3. In being strengthened by the Holy Spirit during His test, Jesus was able walk away in victory and had opened the door for God's ministering angels to come onto the scene for His support (Matthew 4:11).

So when Jesus during the crucifixion wore a crown of thorns, it was so we could be free from satan's attacks or lies. We need to acknowledge in our life what Paul heard from God "My Grace is sufficient for you" so we also can have the peace, strength and release that God's Grace will bring. So what is this "Grace" and how do I use it in our lives?

To better understand what Grace is let's look at the definition in the 1828 Dictionary.

1. *Favour; good will; kindness; disposition to oblige another; as a grant as an act of grace.*
2. *Appropriately, the free unmerited love and favor of God, the spring and source of all the benefits men receive from him. And if by grace, then it is no more of works. (Romans 11.)*
3. *Favorable influence of God; divine influence or the influence of the spirit, in renewing the heart and restraining from sin. My grace is sufficient for thee. (2 Corinthians 12.)*
4. *The application of Christ's righteousness to the sinner. Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. (Romans 5.)*
5. *A state of reconciliation to God. (Romans 5.2.)*

We take this free, unmerited, reconciliation of God's Grace that was provided for us through accepting Jesus as our Lord and Saviour. Then apply this Grace onto our lives by accepting the Word of God as recorded in the Bible as our highest truth. Then when satan comes and feeds us thorns (cares, worries, pressures, distractions) we wash this poison away through washing ourselves (mind) with what the Word (Bible Promises) says and then keep these thoughts as truth as our Helmet of Salvation. Only in accepting God's Word as the highest or final truth for our thorns do we allow ourselves to change the written Word (Logos) to be transformed into a Rhema Word. This Rhema Word is the Sword of the Spirit or Word (Bible Promise) spoken by us in faith and can be seen in us saying "It is written" to satan's lies. This is the action of keeping the Helmet of Salvation on our heads to protect us from the thorns of satan's cares, fear, pressures, distractions and allows God to be our source so we can bear fruit.

So use your Salvation that was received when you became a Christian and keep this Helmet on your head so you can be free from the cares of the world or the thorns of the enemy. Remember God is Love and He sent His ONLY Son because He sooooo Loved us. After sending His Son to earth to pay such a price for our sins, you can be sure He is interested and willing to help us against satan in our daily lives. He desires us to become strong so we can be a Powerful Witness of His Goodness and be placed on a lampstand for the world to see for the Glory of God!

(All scripture quotes are from the Amplified Version of the Bible)