



Series Title--Crop Failure
Part Three—Lack of Cultivation
Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23

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Objective Sentence: Everyone can avoid crop failure by not making three mistakes associated with crop failure.

Introduction; Frank Pollard: A young man was driving his BMW around a curve when he realized the car was out of control and about to plummet over a cliff. Somehow he managed to unbuckle his seatbelt, jump out of the car and survive the crash. Unfortunately for him his left arm was severed from his body as a result of the accident. He stood there at the side of the cliff looking down at his burning BMW and said, “Oh, no! My car! My car! My car! A man who had stopped to help said, “Mister, you have just lost your left arm, and you’re crying about your car?” The young man looked down, realizing for the first time his arm was gone and yelled to top of his voice, “Oh, no, my Rolex, my Rolex watch; my fifty thousand dollar Rolex.

Read Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23 NKJV Jesus spoke many things to them in parables, saying: “Behold, a sower went out to sow. ⁴ And as he sowed, some *seed* fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. ⁵ Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. ⁶ But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. ⁷ And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. ⁸ But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹ He who has ears to hear let him hear. ¹⁸ “Therefore hear the parable of the sower: ¹⁹ When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand *it*, then the wicked *one* comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. ²⁰ But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹ yet he has **no root in himself**, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. ²² Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the

deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. ²³ But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. **(Lack of Preparation, Dedication, Cultivation**

- #1. Lack of Cultivation** (*Pastor Dan: Many sacrifice that which is best on the altar of that which is good and many others sacrifice that which is most important on the altar of that which is important. These are the hearers of God's word who understand it but allow themselves to become distracted through many and varied interests to the point of crowding Jesus out of their lives. People become so involved in life's activities that they become too busy to pray, read God's Word, give to Him and offer their lives in service to Barclay: It is not only the things which are obviously bad which are dangerous. It is the things which are good, for the second best is always the worst enemy of best.*)
- 1. Lack of Maintenance** (*2 Peter 1:2-8 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, ³ as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, ⁴ by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. ⁵ But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, ⁶ to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, ⁷ to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. ⁸ For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.)*)
- a. *Paul George:* The seeds on thorny ground represent those whose hindrances are not internal causes but external snares that render the third class of hearers unfruitful through the **attractions and distractions** of the world. These people once lived for God but allowed the things of this world to come before God.
 - b. *Pastor Dan:* If we allow our natural desires to get out of hand the end result is a lust for things that are destructive to our faith. [**James 1:13-15** Weed your field—weed your life—cultivate and perpetuate your faith]. Each one of us is tempted when he is or she drawn away by his own desires and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.
 - c. **Judges 16:20** God's anointing left Samson because he sought to satisfy the flesh, compromising His walk with God through disobedience.
 - d. *Crandall Miller:* What you feed grows and what you starve dies.
 - e. *Brother Lawrence:* God cannot be the only possessor of your heart unless it is empty of all else. God cannot put what he desires into a heart unless it has been left vacant for Him alone to fill it.
 - f. *James C. Hunter:* Continuous improvement is crucial for people as well as organizations because nothing stays the same in life. Nature shows us clearly that you are either alive and growing or you are dying, dead, or decaying.
 - g. *Pastor Dan:* Fields will return to their former unproductive state if the farmer fails to nurture and cultivate them. **Ezekiel 18:21-24; 33:18-20; Hebrews 3:5-19**
 - h. **Matthew 16:24-25** Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. ²⁵ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

- l. *Brother Lawrence*: ... our only business in this life is to please God. *The Russian writer Turgenev*: It seems to me that to discover what one should put in the first place is the whole problem of life.

Closing and Invitation: This part of the parable, those who received seed among the thorns, speaks of the person who receives the word, understands it and is growing in faith. But somewhere down the path on their journey of faith he or she allows other interests in life to choke the word, making that person who got off to a good start through faith in Jesus to become barren and unfruitful. **Narrow your interests!** Followers of Jesus are not narrow minded—they are those who cultivate their faith and make Jesus the first priority of their lives. **Matthew 7:13-14 NLT** You can enter God’s Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. ¹⁴ But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it.

The Apostle Peter speaks about those [**2 Peter 2:20**] who allowed **their faith in Jesus to become polluted and useless through toxic choices and toxic behavior**, “For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. ²¹ For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. ²² But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: “A dog returns to his own vomit,” and, “a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire