



Choking the Bread

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Eternally Speaking Now

*As is our custom once a month, our church celebrated the Lord's Supper (communion) in April. Near the end of communion, a **loud disturbance** occurred behind me. Everyone turned to see what was happening, and Robin asked from the pulpit if one of the women was okay. The **bread** had apparently 'gone down the wrong pipe,' and she was uncomfortably **coughing**.*

She tried to indicate she was okay, but she quickly got worse.

*I rushed over to her side and laid my hand on her,
gently **calling** on the name of Jesus.
Everything seemed to go in slow motion:
as my **mouth** said Jesus' name over and over,
my mind cried out simultaneously within me, thinking,
"Oh, Lord God! Certainly she won't **choke** on Your **bread!**"*

*As Robin prepared to do the Hymlich, the sweet woman's **throat** cleared, and she said she was okay. By then many of us were in quiet tears, greatly disturbed by the incident yet extremely relieved by its outcome.*

*As I sat there holding the woman's hand,
the Holy Spirit **told** me He had something to **speak** through this.
I committed it to prayer and waited to **hear** from Him.*

It didn't take long for His message to be revealed.

That afternoon, the Lord reminded me of the **Scripture** I'd read that very morning in my One Year **Bible**: the Parable of the Sower.

The word **Choke** only appears in the Bible a few times, and every time it appears, it's found in this section of Scripture:

Jesus *said*,

"Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow.

And it happened, as he sowed, that some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it.

Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth.

But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away.

*And some seed fell among thorns;
and the thorns grew up and **choked** it,
and it **yielded no crop.***

But other seed fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

*And He said to them, "He who has **ears** to **hear**, let him **hear!**"*

(Mark 4:3-9)

What is Jesus talking about? What are these seeds and thorns?

*Thankfully, God's **Word** interprets His **Word**.*

He explains it clearly in the verses that follow.

(Since this parable is in Matthew, Mark and Luke, I'm including the explanations from all three, providing the full picture I sense the Lord wants us to see.)

Matthew 13:22

*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**.*

Mark 4:18

*Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who **hear** the **word**, and the cares of this world,*

the deceitfulness of riches,

and the desires for other things entering in

***choke** the **word**, and it becomes **unfruitful**.*

Luke 8:14

Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have *heard*, go out and are *choked* with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring **no fruit to maturity**.

Get the picture?

I believe the Lord chose this dear, honorable woman of God at our church-- the one who almost *choked* on the communion *bread*, to serve as a picture-- to provide a warning, to any with *ears* to *hear*:

Don't *choke* the *Bread* of Life!

Don't let the cares,
riches, and
pleasures of life
take a higher place than **Jesus Himself**. Amen.

CHALLENGE:

Check out what happened one week after the incident occurred with the woman and the communion *bread*:

Our church hosted an end-of-semester *dinner* for the families of the children who come to our weekly after-school Good News Time. During the program, Robin was moved to give an *invitation* to any who would receive **Christ** as their Savior. Eight parents raised their hands! Most of them haven't darkened the doors of a church for decades.

The following weekend, on **Resurrection** Sunday, nine visitors-- more parents of Good News kids-- surrendered their lives to the Lord. Then eleven people got **baptized**! One elder said it was the best Resurrection service he'd ever experienced.

We had no idea the Lord would **pour out His Holy Spirit** in such a beautiful, powerful way. And He'd spoken ahead of time-- He'd vividly provided us with a word of preparation and warning beforehand:

Pay *attention!* Listen! Be *vigilant!*
Do all you can to keep the thorns from *choking* the seeds of God's **Word**,
planted in the hearts of these precious people, these new children of God.

But it goes farther...

*I believe this **wake-up call** isn't limited to our little church and small rural town.
Could it be a timely word for each of us individually?
Could it be a word of warning for all of God's people across the land?*

*It's a terrible thing to be **unfruitful** for God!
It's like holding the **key** to something amazing, yet not entering in.
It's like having a **ticket** to something incredible, yet not participating.
It's like being **invited** to the party of the year, yet not attending.
It's surviving, not thriving.*

*Is there anyone in your realm of influence who may be in danger of the thorns
of life-- riches, cares, pleasures, distractions-- **choking** the seed of God's **Word**
in their lives? If so, they remain **unfruitful**.*

*Will you consider rushing over to them,
gently placing your hand on their shoulder,
interceding on their behalf in the name of Jesus, and
preparing to do a 'spiritual Hymlich' if necessary?*

*It may be a matter of **life** and **death**, and you may be the very one God has
chosen to help them **understand**. Read, study, listen to, and learn God's Word.
If we **hear** the Bible and **understand** it, then the thorns won't **choke** the seed!*

*"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." Matthew 13:23*

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