

Merimna Part 3

– *care, anxiety, worry* –

Concept

The Greek concept of **μέριμνα** (merimna) describes a state in which someone is mentally occupied with something. It manifests as an anxious, troubled, and distracted mind. The attention consumed with the cares of this life. The Bible teaches this is Satan's only weapon against a believer in Christ, one that he employs to hinder spiritual growth.

Introduction

We are continuing with part three in our eight-part study on the Greek word **μέριμνα** (merimna, Strong's 3308) and its verb form **μεριμνάω** (merimnao, Strong's 3309).

Definition

The noun **μέριμνα** (merimna) is translated as *care, anxiety, and worry*. Its root is the Greek word **μερίζω** (merizō, Strong's 3307), which is translated *to divide, or to separate*.

Origin

Derived from the noun, the verb form **μεριμνάω** (merimnao) means *to be anxious, to be troubled, and careful thought*.

Usage

The noun and verb forms of **μέριμνα** (merimna) are used in the New Testament and can carry either positive or negative associations. Used in the positive, these words convey the idea of *focused care*. By contrast, the negative conveys the idea of *distraction through occupying the attention of the mind*.

Review ~ Meaning Part Two

Last week we studied from the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 6:24-34 wherein Jesus established four basic principles involved in **μέριμνα** (merimna):

- (1) The first principle is found in Verse 24 - Jesus said that a human being was not created with a capacity to serve two masters. He specifically said we do not have the capacity to serve God and materialism.
- (2) The second principle Jesus presented is in Verse 25. He commanded, "Do not be anxious (**μεριμνάω**, merimnao) for your life, what you should eat and what you should drink; nor for your body, what you should put on."

(3) Based upon these two, Jesus then presents a third principle in Verse 33, "But you seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

(4) The fourth principle is found in Verse 34. He said we should not be anxious (**μεριμνάω**, merimnao) about tomorrow.

Meaning Part Three ~ Luke 8:4-15

We are continuing our study on the importance of understanding how Satan uses **μέριμνα** (merimna), *the occupation of the attention of our minds*, to distract us from the things of the Lord. Our textual basis for this study is Luke 8:4-15, The Parable of the Sower:

4) And while a large crowd was gathering together, and the ones from city after city were traveling to Him, He spoke through a parable:

5) "The one sowing went out to sow his seed; and as he was sowing, some indeed fell along the road, and it was trampled down, and the birds of heaven ate it.

6) "And other *seed* fell upon the rock; and after it sprung up, it withered, on account of it had no moisture.

7) "And other *seed* fell in *the* middle of the thorns; and after the thorns sprang up with it, they choked it.

8) "And other *seed* fell upon the good ground, and after it sprung up it produced fruit *a* hundred times." While He was saying these things, He was crying out, "The one having ears to hear let him hear."

9) And His disciples were asking Him, saying, "What might this parable mean?"

10) And He said, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest in parables, in order that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand."

11) "Now this is the parable; the seed is the Word of God;

12) "and the ones along the road are the ones who while hearing the Devil comes and removes the Word from their heart, in order that they should not be saved having believed.

13) "And the ones upon the rock *are* those who when they should hear, they received the word with joy, and these have no root, they believe for *a* time, and in time of testing they fall away.

14) "And that which fell into the thorns, these are the ones having heard, and while going under *the* cares (μέριμνα**) and riches and pleasures of life are choked and do not bring to completion.**

15) "And that which in the good ground, these are they who in a right and good heart after having heard the Word they hold it down, and they bring forth fruit in endurance.

Overall Theme

Before we can discuss the importance of this parable, we must first understand the overall theme of this section of Scripture as given to us in Luke 8:18, "Therefore, be observing how you are hearing; for whoever may have, it will be given to him; and whoever may not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him."

Understanding the Parable

The meaning of the Parable of the Sower is found in Verses 11-15. Four different ways in which a person can hear the Word of God are presented. Of the four, only one produces salvation. This means that there are three conditions where salvation is not brought to completion:

The first of these occurs when a person's heart is so hard in resisting God's Word that the Word of God does not penetrate his heart and therefore can be and is removed by Satan.

The second heart condition occurs when a person hears the Word with excitement but does not allow it to take root within himself. Consequently, he only lasts until trials come. Those trials then cause him to fall away from the things of the Lord.

The third heart condition is presented in Verse 14. This occurs when a person hears the Word of God but continues "under the influence of the cares (**μέριμνα**, merimna), riches, and pleasures of life," which then choke out the influence of the Word of God.

An Example

This parable teaches us that the Word of God will not bear the fruit of salvation if a person who is hearing the Word of God remains *under the influence of the cares of this life*. Bearing in mind that a person only has the capacity to serve one master, a good illustration of this is the story of the rich, young ruler presented in Luke 18:18-23. Jesus told the young ruler that he lacked one thing to inherit eternal life; and then instructed him, "Sell as much as you have and distribute it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come follow Me." When the rich, young ruler heard this, he became very grieved, for he was exceedingly rich. He was grieved because his focus in life was on his riches and he couldn't give them up for Christ.

More Examples

We can begin to understand some of the more difficult teachings of the Lord once we understand the concept of **μεριμνάω** (merimnao) as presented in the Scriptures. The Lord, being aware of Satan's schemes and knowing that each of us has the capacity to serve only one master, addressed this issue with each individual person He met.

Multiple examples can be found in Luke 9:57-62:

- 57) **And it happened while they were going in the way someone said to Him, "I will follow You wherever you should go, Lord."**
- 58) **And Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of heaven nests; but the Son of Man does not have where he may lay *His* head."**
- 59) **And He said to another, "Follow Me." And he said, "Lord, allow me after having gone to first bury my father."**
- 60) **But Jesus said to him, "Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but when you yourself go declare the kingdom of God."**
- 61) **And also another said, "I will follow You, Lord; but first allow me to say good- bye to the ones at my house."**
- 62) **But Jesus said to him, "No one after having put his hand upon *the* plough, and continually looking toward the things behind, is fit for the kingdom of God."**

In this text, Jesus interacted with three different men. One was called by the Lord and two volunteered to follow Him.

The First Man

The first volunteer stated that he would follow the Lord wherever He went. The Lord's reply touched the very heart of the man's worldly *care* (**μέριμνα**, merimna). Jesus told him that He Himself didn't have a place to lay His head. It gave the man something to consider in making his decision to follow Jesus. This man obviously placed value on having a house to live in and therefore had to make a choice between following Jesus and having that human comfort.

The Second Man

The second man was called by Jesus to follow Him; but this man expressed the need to first take care of his father. The Lord said that he should allow the spiritual dead to bury their own physical dead. The Lord was pointing out the man's concern that was keeping him from following Jesus.

The Third Man

The third man, the other volunteer, told the Lord that he would follow Him after he had said good-bye to his household. At this point, the Lord reiterated what He first presented in Matthew 6:24-34 and Luke 8:4-15. He said, "No one after having put his hand to the plough, and continually looking toward the things behind, is fit for the kingdom of God." The word *fit* is the Greek word **εὐθετος** (euthetos, Strong's 2111), which means *to be lined up with*. Jesus taught that a person could not be aligned with the kingdom of God if he is constantly looking back at the things behind (**μέριμνα**, merimna) while he attempts to put his hand to the plow (salvation).

Satan's Weapon

The Lord is not the only one who understands how we function. Satan also knows that a person has the capacity to serve only one master: either the Lord or the things (including people) of this earthly life. Therefore he scouts us; and once he has determined what is important to us, he uses those things, no matter what they are, to pull our attention away from the Lord.

Notes

- Merimna is the English font spelling of the Greek word **μέριμνα**.
- Merimnao is the English font spelling of the Greek word **μεριμνάω**.
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