

# #36 Northside Natter

25 November 2020

Today, I'm taking a brief look at being **Choked to Death**.

We all know the story of the sower and the seed. Sometimes, it's hard to remember the four scenarios that go with it. One of them follows and I encourage you to look up the rest at your leisure.

**Mark 4:19** *And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.*

Do you think it's possible that someone who has been walking with the Lord for twenty or thirty years, or possibly even forty years, to become this person? It's easy to relate this scripture to someone who has been around a short time and doesn't yet have that strong and immovable vision for eternal life. Yet, I can tell you that it doesn't matter whether we've been in the Lord for five minutes or fifty years, we are all capable of being choked to spiritual death.

We know and understand quite well that the sins of our past, present and future have been forgiven. We know this because Jesus's death atoned for all sin, for all time. The gates of hell are open wide and waiting for those who will not make God the king of their hearts. All those who reject God are preparing their feet for their final journey. They are consumed with the deceitfulness of riches, the lusts of life and the cares of this world. Many, with very little understanding of God, blame him for everything that goes wrong in the world and thereby give themselves an excuse for not wanting him in their lives.

I know a couple who were both spirit-filled in about 1980. They loved the Lord with all their heart but they loved their church more and would never leave it regardless of being encouraged to do so. They thought to change their church from the inside. But the Lord commands otherwise.

## **2 Corinthians**

*Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you.*

This couple failed to make any change to their church from the inside. As a matter of fact, the opposite happened. A few years ago, I noticed that this couple no longer prayed in the spirit. They no longer read their bibles as part of their daily ritual. They were once again fully immersed in the ritualistic and repetitious prayers of their church instead. They had both refused water baptism as adults because their priest told them there was no need for it. Yet, Jesus taught otherwise.

## **Matthew 13:12**

*For whosoever has, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever has not, from him shall be taken away even that he has.*

This couple was given the greatest gift the Lord could possibly bestow on them. For over thirty years they exercised this gift, yet their continual refusal to complete the contract with

the Lord cost them everything they had. They walk in darkness once more, overcome by the false doctrines and lying lips of their own church.

But what about the saints? We have been given this amazing gift from God and we have completed that which was required of us, i.e. water baptism. We also continue in his ways, read and pray in the spirit daily and do not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, but encourage one another. (**Hebrews 10:25**).

Yet the cares of this world, the lusts of the flesh and the deceitfulness of riches can turn our heads and consume our minds.

We've heard it said that, 'once saved, not always saved'. This indicates that salvation is to be maintained, worked on, nurtured, fostered and perfected. It doesn't come naturally. As a matter of fact, in order to hold onto salvation, we must deny our natural urges. We must push down our human condition to do it. Giving in to man's natural inclinations will lose us our salvation. Unless, and with the Lord there's always an unless, we turn back to God with all our hearts, minds, and strength.

The cares of this world are hard to keep away from, especially if we are kind-hearted souls who care too much for others. Sometimes, our children's dreadful situations can take our attention away from the Lord because our hearts tear or break for them. So, we jump on our horse in shining armour, like St George, and rush to their aid where we spend so long that we forget our assembling of ourselves together. We tell ourselves that it's okay for now, we'll read and pray instead until things get better for the children. Unfortunately, it never does – because they keep making poor choices – but that bit of information is hidden from us. Before long, the cares of this world, that we have entered into, choke us to death.

The deceitfulness of riches is real. You only have to go on the internet, or check your spam box in your email account, to find the scams that run through the ethernet to every inbox in the world. Websites, set up to ensnare and capture desperate people looking for a better income, say all the right things to convince us to pay large sums of money to become rich with little effort. But why would we buy a job? They're free – if we can find one that will have us. For many though, that is the point. If we find ourselves striving to attain something that is not meant for us, we will soon lose focus of what it is that we have before us.

Patience is everything with the Lord. He will provide. He will supply our every need. He has promised to do so and we must wait on him. Not waiting long enough is not giving him the chance to fulfil his end of the bargain. Sometimes, circumstances need to be moved around to make way for us. It doesn't always happen overnight. So be patient. Don't let impatience choke us to death.

The lust for other things has many facets. Lust of the flesh, lust for fine things, lust for fame and fortune, lust for what the neighbours have. We should never feel like we are missing out just because someone else has something we don't. Or someone else is able to go places and do and see things that we can't. For many worldly people, that is all they will ever have, but for the saints of Christ, there is so much more than earthly pleasures. Don't let a perceived lack of worldly things choke us to death.

We are not about earthly chattels, we're about spiritual possessions. We are building a mansion for eternal life, without money. We will have riches beyond compare. Our riches

will be so great that the street we will tread will be paved with pure gold as if pure gold has a value akin to bitumen.

**Revelation 21:21**

*. . . and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.*

The things of this earth will not survive to enter into the eternity of eternities.

**2 Peter 3:11**

*Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought yet to be in all holy conversation and godliness?*

We know what manner of person we ought to be. We must be holy for he is holy. We must be patient and wait for him. We must be focused on him and not allow the world to overcome us. We must overcome the world.

Regardless of how long we have been walking in the Lord, we can still be choked to death. We cannot afford to let that happen and it is within our own power and control to go either way. Like everything, it is a choice. Choose to live or choose to die. Every day holds a choice to be made. Let's not become slack. let's not become complacent. let's stand firmly convicted on the word of God and avoid being choked to death.