

# Week 9

Joel 2 Lifestyle



**WHAT ARE WE HEARING ?  
HOW ARE WE HEARING ?**

# “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

## Matthew 13:9

The elders in Joel’s day missed the prophetic window to change the culture of corporate prayer in their nation. King Josiah, who was reigning during that period, had instituted reforms and restored temple worship. But his efforts were not enough to bring about a change in the hearts and the lifestyle of the people with regards to prayer and wholeheartedness. Sadly, the window to avert the coming judgment was missed! Not long after Josiah’s death, the Babylonians began their invasion of Israel.

The invitation to hear is so critical! It is not a vague summon.

Responding correctly at a key juncture of history can mean the difference between life and death! Through setting a culture of corporate prayer, a crisis can be averted, and be turned into a blessing or even a revival.

God’s nature is such that He will always warn before judgments come.

We can see this in Jesus’ warning to the Jewish people some 40 years before Jerusalem was ravaged by Titus’ army (Matthew 23:38). We also see Jesus inviting the churches in Asia Minor to hear what the Spirit is saying in the midst of trials so that they can overcome.

**God is speaking.**  
**The crucial question of this hour is:**  
**Are we hearing?**



**The great need of this hour is to  
hear the voice of God correctly.**

**We need to learn to hear the voice  
of God with clarity and with  
understanding.**



The most emphasized exhortation by Jesus during His earthly ministry is about hearing. Sixteen times Jesus calls His people to hear the mysteries of the kingdom - eight times in the Gospel (Matt. 11:15; 13:9; 13:43; Mark 4:9; 4:23; 7:16; Luke 8:8; 14:35) and eight times in the book of Revelation (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; 13:9).

The Parable of the Sower (Matt. 13:1-9, 18-23; Mark 4:1-24; Luke 8:4-18) contains vital lessons about hearing. Through this parable, Jesus paints four different scenarios and warns us to 'watch out for the things we hear'. It speaks of the way the word (seed) is received, what we hear and the corresponding end result. Jesus is warning us to take heed WHAT we hear (Mark 4:24).

We need to hear not just with our ears but with the understanding of our hearts. In the same parable in Luke 8, Jesus reveals four heart conditions. Very often, the condition of our heart determines how we hear. Jesus exhorts us to take heed HOW we hear. (Luke 8:18 NKJV).



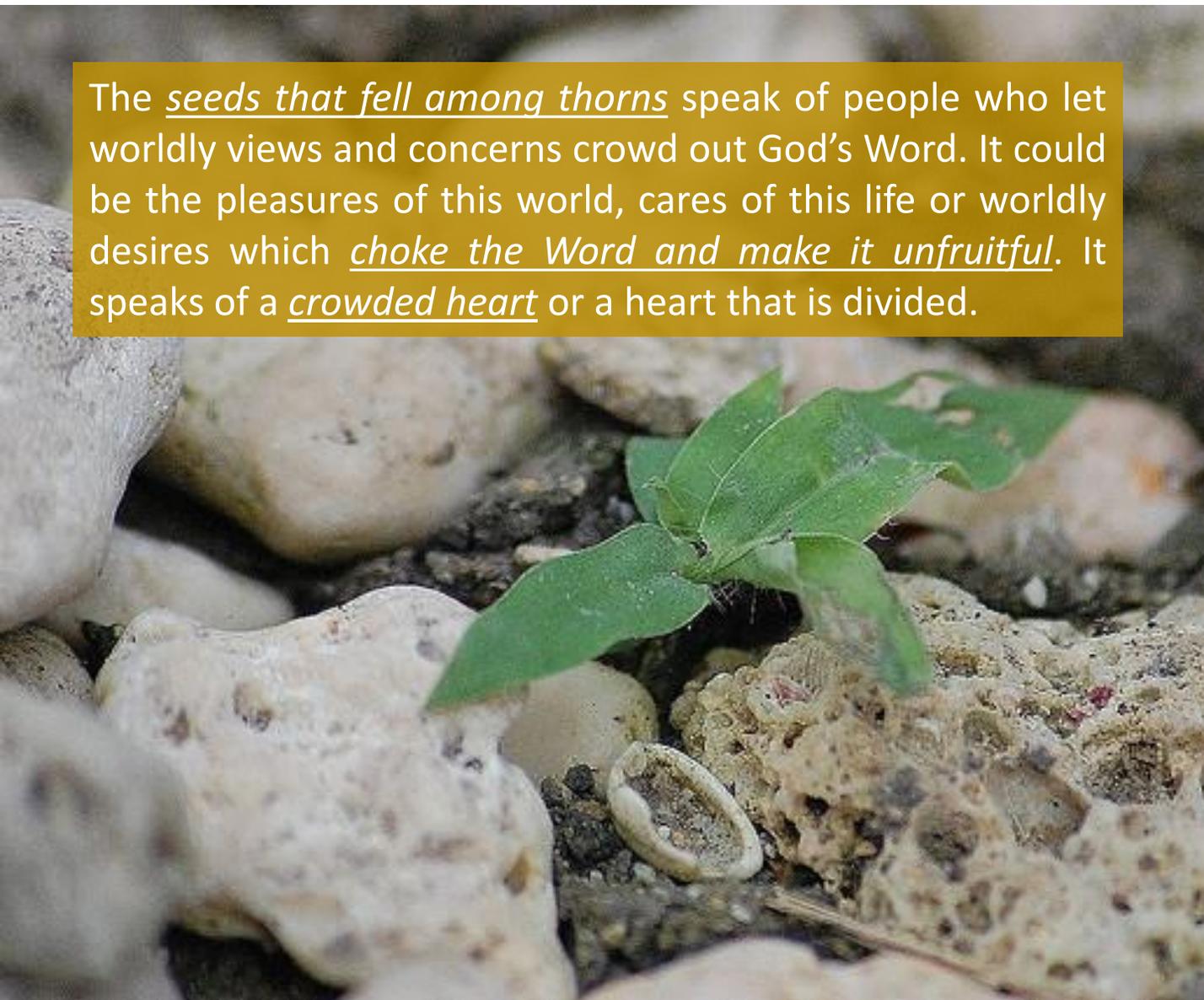
Let us go through the four scenarios of the parable. In the first scenario, the *birds of the air* came and devoured the seeds. Here God is telling us to watch out for “*scoffers*”. These are *people who cast doubt on the Word of God* (Mark 4:4,15).

In our context, we are referring to those who do so with regards to the times and seasons we are living in. Even in the days of Jeremiah, there were false prophets that said that all was well, and distracted God’s people from correctly hearing and responding to His warning to turn.

The *seeds that fell by the wayside* speaks of *hardened unreceptive hearts*. We always need to watch our heart, remove any cynicism and keep it tender and receptive towards God.

The seeds that fell on the rock refer to people with no depth in the Word of God. They are immature and lack discernment. It speaks of a “shallow” heart. Are we satisfied with merely superficial messages which Hebrews 5:13 calls milk, just like the seed that springs up with no roots or depth (Mark 4:5-6, 16-17)? If we are not rooted in the deep truths of who God is and what is in His heart, we will be scorched when the trials and tribulations come.

The seeds that fell among thorns speak of people who let worldly views and concerns crowd out God’s Word. It could be the pleasures of this world, cares of this life or worldly desires which choke the Word and make it unfruitful. It speaks of a crowded heart or a heart that is divided.



# Take heed what you hear! Take heed how you hear!

Finally, the seeds that fell on good soil speaks of those with a noble and good heart, a heart that is open, teachable, receptive and responsive. True hearing always gives rise to a response and produces a change. Hearing without a response is not hearing at all, and will cause us to be spiritually dull. We need to respond and take heed!

Ask God for an open heart to receive the truth. Be intentional in the pursuit of God, setting aside time to go deep in His Word.

Make choices that will remove the clutter in our hearts. Often, it is the good things in life that will hold us back from pursuing the best, which is Jesus Himself.

Are we hearing what God is saying with regards to the times and seasons and the urgent need to cultivate a Joel 2 lifestyle?



# Readings and Prayers for the week

## Readings for Week 9

Read through the parable of the sower, Matt. 13:1-9, 18-23; Mark 4:1-25 and Luke 8:4-18.

Ask Holy Spirit to teach you how to hear and how to grow deep in understanding His Word.

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## Prayers for Week 9

Use Psalm 16:8 to pray that you will always set the Lord before you.

Pray that the Church will be like Daniel, setting her heart to know and understand the things of God (Dan. 1:17, 10:12).