

Rule Of The Harvest

In 1999, my mind was still focused on being an Army Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO). It seemed everywhere I looked, everything I read, and practically every conversation I heard was about the attributes new Soldiers just out of basic combat training lacked. The noise was coming from NCOs and officers. Maybe I was simply aging and needed to fade away as old Soldiers supposedly do. On October 1st, I did. I also wrote a lengthy rant titled "[*Rule of the Harvest*](#)" It's probably too long for an internet article, but then I wasn't too concerned about that. Twenty years later, I heard the same noise. It was loud enough the Army decided to fix basic training and physical fitness. This time, I believe those parts did need repair.

The old article was on my mind because Sunday morning my Pastor's sermon was from the book of Mark, "*The Parable of the Sower.*" I went back and revisited the old tirade. You know what? The rule of the harvest is still rule of the harvest.

The Pastor focused some on a piece of the scripture and there was little doubt he was talking directly to me. "*Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the words; but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.*" [Mark 4:18-19](#) In our worldly existence, we allow much to get in the way of what's important, don't we?

I knew the Pastor was talking to me directly, or more likely it was a much greater Voice I heard. It made me think of when I was a youngster sitting in the pews of our small wooden church. The church was white and sat beside a dusty dirt road. The dust seemed to settle on everything except the church. It was always gleaming white. I would sit in those hard-wooden pews, squirming mostly, until the Preacher started his sermon. He would hold a worn Bible in one hand and a

handkerchief in the other. He would traipse back and forth shouting fire and brimstone, as the old folks called it, to the frequent amen and occasional halleluiahs from the congregation. I knew beyond any doubt that every hell-bound word that came out of the Preacher's mouth was pointed at me. As he dabbed his forehead with the handkerchief and pointed with his Bible, I would slide down lower and lower in the pew trying to escape his fiery words and glare. I'd inch up a little and sure enough each time I did it, he was staring right at me sending all manner of hell and damnation my way. My adult reaction was subtle. I turned my good ear toward the Pastor and really tried to contemplate the message.

We are blessed to live in a great country. The parable of the sower is descriptive of modern-day America. Our founders planted seeds in the right places enabling us to overcome many bad decisions made by men although we still hold to some horrific ones. In the beginning, we embraced In God We Trust. But we've allowed ourselves to become distracted by *"the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things."* Not only has our nation been on a lengthy path of turning away from God, we've forgotten our purpose. I firmly believe that America has a purpose. The purpose of leading the world toward what's good. We are still the beacon of hope for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

There is a quote attributed, wrongly so some declare, to Alexis de Tocqueville: *"America is great because she is good. If America ceases to be good, America will cease to be great."* The source of the quote matters less than does the truthfulness of the statement. We are drawn away from good by *"the desires for other things."* According to our 2nd President, John Adams, *"Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."* Take a look around. Godless countries are under the boot of brutal, godless dictators. We

have politicians, would be leaders, selling the same look to the government not God approach to America.

“Of all the dispositions and habits, which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.” George Washington, Farewell Address.

In 1999, I asked the complaining NCOs what they were going to do about the problems they aired. Now, it is more of a personal question for each of us, I think. If you feel as I do that our country has been making a long turn away from what is good and that fiery old preacher is pointing his Bible at you, then what must each of us do about it? It's a look in the mirror question.

“As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it.” [Job 4:8](#)

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E-Mail JD Pendry: jd@jdpendry.com

Website: [Pendry's American Journal](#)