

Sermon – Luke 8.4-15 (Sexagesima Sunday – 2022)

Let us pray: Lord God, heavenly Father, we thank You that through Your Son Jesus Christ You have sown Your holy Word among us: We pray that You will prepare our hearts by Your Holy Spirit, that we may diligently and reverently hear Your Word, keep it in good hearts, and bring forth fruit with patience; and that we may not incline to sin, but subdue it by Your power, and in all persecutions comfort ourselves with Your grace and continual help; through Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever. Amen.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

⁴ And when a great multitude had gathered, and they had come to Him from every city, He spoke by a parable:

⁵ "A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it.

⁶ "Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture.

⁷ "And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it.

⁸ "But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold." When He had said these things He cried, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

⁹ Then His disciples asked Him, saying, "What does 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 *it is given* in parables, that`Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand.'

¹¹ "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

¹² "Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

¹³ "But the ones on the rock *are those* who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away.

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.

¹⁵ "But the ones *that* fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep *it* and bear fruit with patience.

These are Your Words heavenly Father. Sanctify us by the truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear fellow redeemed,

“These are Your Words heavenly Father. Sanctify us by the truth. Your Word is truth?”

Think about what we are confessing and what we are praying for in that prayer. We confess that the words of the Bible are God’s Words, not man’s. We are confessing that God’s Word is truth, not just part of it, not just the parts that we like, all of it is the truth of God. We are also confessing that it is different than any other Word written, spoken, or thought by man. God’s Word has divine power. It has the power to sanctify us, that, is to make us sinners

holy. We are praying that God's Word may have its way with us. We pray that the Law may bring us to sorrow over our sinful condition, and that the Gospel forgive all our sins, strengthen our faith, and produce in us many fruits of faith.

Those words make for us a very substantive confession, and they give us a very good prayer, especially fitting for us to pray before the sermon, as we meditate on His Word.

As we consider the Gospel text today, it is important for us to remember that it is God's Word that powerfully saves us and produces fruit. Since the parable compares different kinds of soil it may seem like it is the soil that produces the fruit. But it is not. It is the seed.

It is the Word of God that powerfully does it. Consider what God has done for you through His Word in your life. You and I were born of the flesh, spiritually dead, wrought in sin, condemned to death. Born of perishable seed, our sinful mind, was an enemy of God. We could not love Him, nor could we even know Him. The spiritual things of God were unknowable by us, because we were not spiritual. If we were soil, we were rocks, where nothing could grow.

So that's us on the one side, but then there is God, who is good and holy. For the sake of Christ's sacrificial death on the cross, there is with Him, forgiveness, life and salvation for us! There is peace with Him!

God's Word reveals to you who God is and the gracious work of salvation which He has accomplished for you. Yet, by nature our ears hear, but they do not hear, our eyes see, but they do not see. The Word is foolishness to those who do not believe, as Paul says. **"The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned"** (1 Co 2:14).

But somewhere along the line, the seed of God's Word was sown in you, and a miracle occurred. The Holy Spirit has caused your ears to hear and your eyes to see. He turned us from hostile rocks into a soil where the Word took root. He performed this miraculous work in you, not separate and apart from the Word, but in and through the Word. In the Word is the power of the Holy Spirit, causing you to be born again, taught of the Spirit the spiritual truths of God.

Paul said, **"to us who are being saved, the word of the cross is the power of God."** Jesus said, that all who believe in Him shall believe in Him through His Word.

Peter expresses this truth saying, **"you have been born again, not of perishable seed, [the seed of your parents,] but of imperishable [seed], through the living and abiding word of God!"** (1 Peter 1:23)

The Word of God, which caused all things to be created out of nothing, which raises the dead to life, and to calm the storms of the sea, also has the power to create spiritual life out of spiritual death, which has powerfully and miraculously happened in us.

And so we say, we are saved, we have faith, not because we are good soil, but because the seed, namely, God's Word, has been planted in us, and created in us saving faith.

So when we are called to repent! We can only repent by the Holy Spirit working through the Word. When we are called to hear the Word of God and believe in Jesus Christ our Savior, we can only hear and believe by the Holy Spirit working through the Word. When we are called to remain faithful unto death, so that we may receive the crown of life, we can only remain faithful by the Holy Spirit working through the Word. When Jesus calls you to receive the Word with good soil, that it may be firmly rooted in you, we can only do so by the Holy Spirit working through the Word. The Word is vital to our lives in God's kingdom! Because of the saving Word of God, we are new creations in Christ Jesus, through faith. We do love the Word. We do repent. We do gladly believe. We do fight the good fight of faith, clinging to God's Word.

But we have certain enemies that make our hearts less than ideal soil for the Word of God. They are the devil, the world and our own sinful flesh.

Our sinful flesh, no longer ruling us, still resists the Word. We come to church to hear the Word, but sometimes we simply go through the motions, not hearing the Law to our sorrow, or seeking the comfort of the gospel of Christ Jesus the Lord. Or more dangerously we might receive the Sacrament of the Altar without first examining ourselves.

Or perhaps, our sinful flesh might seek for any excuse to avoid the hearing or reading of the Word. Sometimes, something as little as a puddle on the ground between the house door and the car might be enough to keep one away from church.

The sinful flesh leads us to think that the Word is boring or powerless. Don't you think that would make our hearts resistant to the seed?

And the world puts before us obstacles to the hearing of the Word. False teachers trample on the word, claiming to be Christian teachers, yet teaching the doctrine of demons, tempting you to take the lie and abandon the truth. The world urges you to trust in your heart, to trust your emotions and feelings as the source of truth. Such things put rocks in the soil.

The world also places its cares and pleasures before us, tempting us to desire those than the Word of God. The Word becomes something we concern ourselves with only one hour Sunday mornings, if that, and the other 167 hours of the week are for the things of this world. Worldly cares and pleasures can easily become weeds choking out the Word.

And the devil is the mastermind deceiver. With temptations for the sinful flesh and the sinful world at his disposal, he seeks to snatch the Word away from us in any way possible.

Each one of us should recognize that at times the soil of our hearts becomes compacted, that it becomes rocky and that thorns and weeds grow. We sin.

You who have ears, hear, you who have eyes, see. You and I are sinners. We have broken the third commandment, despising God's Word and its preaching. In weakness our hearts have become poor soil for the growth of the seed of God's Word in us. Repent!

And now receive the saving seed, which God has called me to cast upon you, the people of this congregation. For the sake of Christ's saving work on the cross, you are forgiven all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

This is not just information, though it is very comforting information. But it is the power of God for salvation. The eternal blessings of Christ won for you on the cross, are effectively present here in the Word spoken by the sinful man that stands before you. The Word saves you, because in this gracious Word of God, all the blessings of Christ are delivered to you, that you may be saved from the devil, the world and your sinful flesh.

The same Word that powerfully created faith in you also sustains your faith, continuing to cultivate in you a good and honest heart to receive His Word with thanksgiving. The Word of the Spirit also leads you to walk in the Spirit, producing love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Such things are the evidence of the Word rooted in our hearts.

May God grant this and that His Word may continually be sowed and rooted in our hearts and in the hearts of those of the next generations.

We close with words from one of our hymns: Precious Jesus, I beseech Thee, May Thy words take root in me; may this gift from heav'n enrich me So that I bear fruit for Thee! Take them never from my heart Till I see Thee as Thou art, When in heav'nly bliss and glory I shall greet Thee and adore Thee. Amen.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Forevermore. Amen.