

Sexagesima
St. Luke 8:4-15
February 24th, 2019
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

He Spoke by A Parable

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

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

Adam and Eve were placed into the Garden of Eden to cultivate the Garden; to sow good seed for them and their generations. But the serpent deceived them. The serpent sowed the bad seed of lies and deception into the hearts of Adam and Eve so that they disobeyed the command of the Lord God to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. On account of their disobedience the good hearts, receptive to God's Word, that the Lord God Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth had formed from the dust of the earth and from Adam's rib became hard hearts unable to hear and obey God's commands. Their hearts, on account of the sin that now dwelt within them, became hard earth—hard dust and soil—and a dry and parched rib without life in it. This malady of death they passed onto their children, and their children's children, until we, their children also received hearts hard to receive the Word of God. We are unable of our own strength to hear the Word of God and come to Him in faith.

The Lord God, through the work of the Holy Ghost, prepares our hearts to hear the Word of God. The Holy Ghost through the Law of God, hammers our rocky hard hearts until in contrition and faith our hearts are made flesh and are ready to hear the Word of God. Our hearts are ready once more to receive the good seed of the Word of God that will produce an hundredfold. The Holy Ghost is able to do this good work in us through the Word of God and the Blessed Sacraments, because He was sent by the Son of God to be our Comforter.

So then, just as the first Adam sinned and caused his and all his descendants' hearts to be hard and unreceptive to the Word of God, the Second Adam—our Lord + Jesus Christ—put on the garment of our flesh so that He might come into this world and sow the good seed of the Word of God. What seed did our Lord + Jesus Christ sow? He sowed the Gospel. He sowed the seed that proclaims that He has put on the garment of our flesh—without sin—so that He might fulfill the Law for us perfectly. He came to do that which Adam and Eve were unable to do: resist the temptations of the devil and the lures of the world and their own fleshly desires. Our Lord + Jesus Christ obeys the commands of the Lord God heavenly Father, and fulfills the Law for us, His very own creation. He also came to spread the seed of the Word that proclaims that He would suffer and die in our place on the tree of the holy cross. He bears the garment of our flesh in order that it might be beaten with rods, whipped with scourges, and be crucified on a pole. He endured the suffering we deserved so that we might go free.

He has called us out of the marketplace of the world, as we heard last Sunday. Today, having

called us into the Garden of the Church, proclaims to us the good news of what He has done for us, and continues to do for us through the Word and the Sacraments with the help of the Holy Ghost preparing our hearts to hear His Word. That is what has happened for us who gather here today. The Lord + Jesus, the Sower of the Seed, has cast His good seed of the Gospel into our hearts and the Holy Ghost has caused it to fall upon good ground, so that it may produce unto an hundredfold. We rejoice to hear the Word of God. We have ears to hear, and so we hear.

However, there are many who do not hear the Word of God and keep it. There were four soils listed in the parable that our Lord + Jesus spoke to the large crowds. Three of those soils did not produce any fruit. Only one out of four soils produced any fruit, even though it produced a great crop. So then, it should not be any surprise to us that so many in this world still have hearts of bad soil too unreceptive to hear the Word of God. This should cause us great sorrow. That mankind still possesses hard hearts and parched ribs unable to hear the Word of God should sadden us greatly. We should not rejoice in our righteousness; our ability to hear the Word of God, while others' hearts remain on the wayside, and in rocky soil, and in thorns. We should also hear this parable and receive the instruction and catechesis in the Word of God that the Sower, our Lord + Jesus Christ, desires for us to hear.

We need to always be examining our hearts. This is what it means to live in our Holy Baptism. For, Holy Baptism was not some event that happened for us many years ago, and then we look on it fondly like a memory of long-lost things from yesteryear. No, we were baptized into "living waters." That means that the well-spring of our Holy Baptism continues to water the Seed of the Word of God even today. And this watering that our Holy Baptism does is it makes us examine ourselves daily. As we confess in the Small Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther, we daily drown the Old Adam within us. We drown that rocky hard heart of ours so that a new heart, a fleshly heart, may be produced and rise as a new creation—a new Adam—before the Lord God.

Therefore, having been called by the Lord + Jesus out of the marketplace of the world, we gather in the field of the Church to be instructed in His Word—with His seed of the Word. He instructs us that our hearts are ever in danger from the devil, the world and even our own fleshly desires.

Just look at the three soils that our Lord spoke about by a parable:

Some of the good seed landed on the wayside. The birds of prey, which our Lord associates with the devil, plucks that seed out right away. This is what the devil desires to do with everyone, including us if we do not daily examine ourselves; if we do not daily drown the Old Adam, and water our hard, rocky hearts. The devil does not want anyone to hear the Word of God, so he works diligently to pluck the Word out of the hearts of all who hear the Gospel. He did this with Adam and Eve, and he desires to do the same to us, every day. He does it to many in the world who hear the Word of God and flat out reject it as nonsense and unworthy of their time and ears.

The devil also controls the world which throws many and various trials and temptations our way. This is the seed that fell on rocky soil. There was some soil on top of the rocks that was enough to produce a small plant, but the sun—the persecutions for being a Christian—scorched the plants so that they withered and died. There are many in this world who profess to be Christian, but their Christianity is only good so long as the world approves. Just look at all the false preachers who preach about prosperity; that if God really loves you then you will be prosperous and successful. Or, look at all the false preachers that preach that you can live any kind of sinful life you want so long as you believe in + Jesus. They promote all sorts of abominations: homosexuality, abortion, adultery and divorce, and the like. Sadly, many of these false preachers lead many astray.

But we should also be on guard when we face persecutions, trials, and temptations. All these bad things that happen to us in this life is meant to burn up our faith. They are meant to take our faith

away. This is why the epistle reading from the Blessed Apostle St. Paul to the Church at Corinth is good to hear on this day, even though it is long—the longest epistle of the Church’s year. For St. Paul tells us about all the things that he has endured for his preaching the Word of God. We can be thankful that our persecution has not led to being stoned to death and imprisonment, yet. No, I imagine that even in our worst trials and temptations, we have not endured the cross as much as St. Paul has in this epistle reading. However, we should always be aware of the worlds lies and deceptions, for it desires greatly to take the seed of faith away from us, and leave us burned up and dead on the rocks.

We even have to be on guard from our own selves. This is perhaps the greatest trial we face. Even as Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden. The temptation to chase after the things of this world. The fruit of the tree in the Garden looked tasty to Adam and Eve. Many things in this life are a tasty treat to us. Money, the pursuit of wealth, success, fame, a good reputation in the world, a good home, a nice car, a good family, good friends, and so on. All these things are given to us by the Lord God so that our lives may not be so insufferable. However, we should never place our trust in them. We should never turn away from our trust in the Lord God to worldly things that will pass away not only in this life, but we will not retain them when we pass on to the next life.

For all these reasons we must daily drown our hard, rocky hearts with the waters of Holy Baptism. Daily do we confess our sins, and believe that on account of what our Lord + Jesus Christ has done for us, we have been forgiven of our sins. By His works we merit righteousness. By His planting of the Seed of the Word of God into our hearts, we have faith and life.

The Holy Ghost has removed our hard, rocky hearts and replaced them with fleshly hearts ready to receive the Word of God. We have been called into the Church. The Holy Ghost catechizes us with the Seed of the Word of God. And next Sunday He will open up our blind eyes to see our Savior, the Lord + Jesus Christ, Who goes to the holy cross for us and for our redemption. He is the New Adam Who did not fall prey to the lies and deception of the devil. Even though Adam and Eve and all their children, including us, fell and continue to fall daily to the lies and deception of the devil, the world, and even our own fleshly, sinful desires, the New Adam, our Lord + Jesus Christ, conquers the devil, the world and sinful flesh by His death on the tree of the cross.

We were once overcome by a tree, but the Lord + Jesus overcomes the devil, our victor, by the tree of the cross. Our Lord + Jesus dies on our behalf, but gives us life. He continues to give life to us and all the world through the Seed of His Word. He preaches into our ears to hear. Listen to the Gospel. Hear what the Lord + Jesus has done for you, and rejoice. But be on guard against the lies and deception of the devil, the world and your own flesh. They desire to take the Seed of faith away from you so that you die eternally.

Let him who has ears to hear, hear! May the Lord + Jesus fill your ears with the good things that He has done for you, and continues to do for you. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory! I will extol Thee, O Lord, and I will praise Thy Name forever and ever. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!