

Sexagesima
St. Luke 8:4-15
February 7th, 2021
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

A Sower Went Out to Sow

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

Lord God, heavenly Father, we thank Thee, that through Thy Son Jesus Christ Thou hast sown Thy holy Word among us: We pray that Thou wilt prepare our hearts by Thy Holy Spirit, that we may diligently and reverently hear Thy Word, keep it in good hearts, and bring forth fruit with patience; and that we may not incline to sin, but subdue it by Thy power, and in all persecutions comfort ourselves with Thy grace and continual help, through Thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

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

If you have ever wondered why it seems that people in this world ignore the Word of God, this parable is for you. Our Lord + Jesus tells us the parable of the Sower of the seed. The Evangelist St. Luke tells us that a great multitude had come to our Lord + Jesus from every city to hear Him. He then proceeds to tell them all that three out of four soils reject the Word of God. For some, the devil comes and snatches away the Word of God out of their hearts right away, so that they refuse to hear the Word outright. Some hear the Word of God with joy, but when trials and temptations occur, they fall away because they have no root; the Word has not truly taken root in their hearts. Others still also hear the Word of God, but it eventually becomes choked out of them for they care about the things of this world more than they do the things of the Lord God.

This is the parable that our Lord + Jesus tells the large crowds that have come from every city to hear Him. Our Lord + Jesus knows the score. Many of these people will fall into one of these three soils that He describes in the parable. Most will reject Him and His Word. In a few short weeks, about sixty days, we will see what is done to our Lord + Jesus for His preaching the truth. He is mocked, beaten, spit upon, whipped, stripped naked and crucified on the tree of the holy cross. He suffers and dies for His preaching. He suffers and dies for proclaiming the Word of God. His sowing of the seed of the Word of God nails Him to the cross.

This is the majority response of the world to the Word of God. They either reject Word of God outright listening rather to the lies of the devil, the world and man's sinful flesh. Or, it dries up and dies because the person sees that bad things happen in this world. Bad things happen in this world and to these people, because sin exists in them and in this world. Corruption, greed, pride, malice, a whole host of temptations, lusts of the flesh, lusts of the heart, sickness, death, pain and misery all attack people in this world both from outward sources and from inside of us. We are attacked on every side at all times. The Church is constantly under attack from the devil, the world and our own sinfulness as the devil tries to steal the Word of God from us outright, or he uses the corruption in this world and within us to dry up the Word of God in our hearts, so that on account of temptation and trial we lose

faith and reject the Word of God.

Then there are still others who allow the cares of this world to choke the Word of God out of them. The cares of this world, like who is going to win some stupid football game, draws more people away from the Word of God. Think about it, how many people today will focus more on a game, or the commercials that happen during the game, then they will on the Word of God. This does not just occur on days like today. The cares of this world—the pleasures and riches of this world—draw many people away from the Word of God daily and often. How often do we neglect the Word of God and prayer, because some event has happened in the world and we need to go on our social media platforms and hear all about it? Or how often have we neglected our weapons against the devil, the world and our flesh, because we have to watch our favorite sport or T.V. program?

If these things do not drive us away from the Word of God—if these things do not choke the Word of God out of our hearts—then there are also the pleasures of this life; all the activities of this world that bring us joy, but also cause us to neglect the study of the Word of God and prayer to our heavenly Father, our Lord + Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost. If we are truly honest with ourselves, we would have to admit that we spend too much time on the cares and pleasures and riches of this life then we do in study and prayer of the Word of God. Our Lord + Jesus is warning us in the parable written for us today from the Evangelist St. Luke that these things will choke out the Word of God from out of our hearts. All these things will cause us to lose faith, and will increase doubt and fear in us. If the devil does not steal it from us through his lies, and trials and temptations do not dry it up from having not root, then the cares, pleasures and riches of this life will choke the seed of the Word of God out of our hearts.

We are given ample opportunities both in our daily lives and within the Church of Christ to hear the Word of God and pray to our heavenly Father. We are given ample opportunities to sharpen our weapons against the onslaught and attacks of the devil, the world and our sinful flesh. How often do we neglect the weapons that we have been given? How often have we grumbled and complained against hearing the Word of God; of having to come to this holy house and sing long hymns and listen to long, boring sermons? These things are offered to us for our growth in the Word of God and our protection from our enemies that would take the Word of God from us. Therefore, my dear friends, if you have ever wondered why so few listen to the Word of God; why so few are here today, our Lord + Jesus tells us, even as He told the great multitudes that came to hear Him, why this is so. The Word of God is under constant attack in us from within and without, and many people fall away because of it.

But our Lord + Jesus does not leave us in our despair over these things. For He also promises that when the seed of the Word of God is planted in noble and good hearts, the Word of God bears good fruit through patience. This is the promise that our Lord God has for us today. This is told us in the Lesson for today from the Prophet Isaiah. The Word of God will accomplish the purpose for which the Lord God sent it. It shall not return to Him void. St. Paul in his Second Epistle to the Church at Corinth also gives testimony that the Word of God remains in a faithful heart even amidst all the trials and persecutions that he endured, he never lost faith, after he was drawn up into the third Heaven and was converted by the Lord + Jesus after he heard inexpressible words in Paradise so that he would stop persecuting the Church and stealing the Word of God from its hearers. The point of the long Epistle reading from St. Paul is that the Word of God endures—the Church endures because it has the Word of God. The Word of God is planted in noble and good hearts and produces much fruit—an hundred fold—through patience.

The Introit expresses our own voice in these matters. “Awake!” we sang. Why does the Lord seem to sleep? Why does the world seem to reject the Word of God? Why does the hatred toward the Church seem to grow and increase as the days progress? Is the Lord God asleep? Does He not care? The Introit not only asks the question, but also gives the answer: “We have heard with our ears” all the

good things that He has done for the people of old. He has driven away and defeated our enemies. He has saved us from our enemies. He has delivered us from our enemies. All through the sowing of the seed of the Word of God, our Lord + Jesus has planted His Word into our noble and good hearts so that we may bring forth fruit an hundredfold through patience.

That brings us to one final question: what is a noble and good heart? How do I know that my heart is prepared to hear the Word of God, and will produce fruit an hundredfold through patience? Another translation of noble is "honest." An honest heart is one that readily confesses its sinfulness. A noble heart—an honest heart—knows that it cannot grow and produce fruit unless it is daily purging away the weeds of sin and shame through daily contrition and faith. We must daily water the Word of God through daily living in our Holy Baptisms. We must drown daily the Old Adam through daily contrition, sorrow over our sins, and faith in the works and merits of the Lord + Jesus, Who suffered and died for us on the tree of the holy cross so that our sins were paid for.

An honest heart—a noble heart—also readily comes to this altar and kneels and confesses its sinfulness and lays that sin at the foot of the cross of its Lord + Jesus and receives from Him His Body and Blood given in bread and wine for the remission of its sins. We come before our Lord + Jesus and hear the Word of God spoken into our ears; we hear the promise that His Body was given for us, and His Blood was shed for us for the remission of sins. We confess on our knees that we are unworthy to receive this good gift, but our Lord + Jesus need only speak His Word and He can implant His Word in us, so that we have a good and noble heart to produce much fruit through patience.

Through much long-suffering the Word of God will produce what the Lord God has intended for it. It will give seed to the sower and bread to the eater and will bring forth and bud in our hearts so that we do not despair from the constant attacks on us by the devil, the world and our flesh, but we will have joy and peace, and break out in singing and clap our hands, for the Word of God will prosper in the thing for which our Lord God has sent it.

Our Lord + Jesus has sowed the seed of the Word of God into our ears and hearts today, even has He sowed the seed of the Word of God to the large multitudes that came to Him from every city to hear Him. He reminds us that sin and death rule this world through the working of the devil, the world and our flesh, and many have lost the Word of God because of it. He warns us that we too, can have the Word of God snatched from us if we allow it to be taken from us. He also reminds us, however, that we should not lose heart or become discouraged, for He has planted His heart in our noble and good hearts. We who daily confess our sins and turn to our Lord + Jesus and His works and merits are kept and preserved in the one, true Church by the Holy Ghost working through the means of grace to produce fruit in us an hundredfold through much patience and long-suffering. Rejoice, my dear friends, for the Lord God has given us His Word—His promise of salvation in Him alone—so that in all times of trouble we can turn to Him and find comfort in our salvation. He who has ears to hear, let him hear! In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, merciful Father, we give Thee most hearty thanks for Thy divine Word, which Thou art pleased to sow as a heavenly seed among us, and we beseech Thee Thou wouldst by Thy Word and Spirit make our hearts a good ground, guard us against the dangers arising from cares and riches and the pleasures of this life, and keep our faith from being up rooted by the blasts of affliction, that in an honest and good heart we may bring forth abundant fruit; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

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

Soli Deo Gloria!