

Sexagesima Sunday
St. Luke 8:4-15
February 23rd, 2025
St. Titus Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC
Athens, GA
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
St. Michael and All Angels Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC
Augusta, GA
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Bring Forth Fruit with Patience

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Sermon Text:

“And that in the good ground, these are such as in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, hold it fast, and bring forth fruit with patience.”

Prayer in Pulpit before 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 that Thou wouldst by Thy Word and Spirit make our hearts a good ground, guard us against the dangers arising from cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and keep our faith from being uprooted 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.

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

My dear friends, our Triune Lord God is ever abundant in His mercy and compassion. He is ever abundant in His gifts toward us. He is unceasing in caring for us poor, miserable sinners. Just observe what we heard last Sunday with the parable of the Workers in the Vineyard: The Householder, our heavenly Father, was persistent in His calling mankind to labor in His Vineyard, the Church. He went out throughout the day calling men to be in Vineyard. In His jealousy for us He persistently continues to call us to Himself. He desires us to be with Him. He desires for us to be in His Church.

Our Lord shows the same love and compassion; the same zeal for us in today's Gospel reading from the Evangelist St. Luke. The Sower, our Lord + Jesus, is persistent in casting out the Seed of the Word of the Lord God. He wants the pure preaching of the Gospel to go into all the world. The Sower is not concerned about where the Seed falls, for different men will receive the Word in different manners. He is only concerned with casting forth the Seed so that it may take root in men's hearts, and grow and bring forth fruit with patience.

This is what our Triune Lord God does for poor, lost sinners. It is what He does for us. He continues unceasingly, untiringly, to call us into the Vineyard. And then, when we are in the Vineyard of the Church, He unceasingly, and untiringly, through His called and ordained Servants of the Word, preaches the pure Word of the Gospel into our ears. The Lord calls and He catechizes us with the pure Word of the Gospel, and the Blessed Sacraments. This is why it is so important for us to be in the

Church. For it is here where we are called, gathered, and enlightened in the Word of God. Here, where two or three gather in the Name of the Lord + Jesus, He is at work through the Holy Ghost, to lead us into repentance, forgive us of our sins, and strengthen us with the hope of everlasting life in Heaven. He does this for us out of His great love and compassion for us; out of His jealousy for us. He wants us to have no other gods. He alone wants to be our God, so that we can truly benefit from His grace and mercy.

Therefore, the Sower, our Lord + Jesus, continues to sow the Seed of the Word of God into the world. He continues to so that Seed into our hearts. Like His heavenly Father, He is also constantly giving us of Himself for our benefit. He would have us look to no other Savior. He would alone be our true and only Savior. For in truth there are no other gods, there are no other Saviors. Salvation is found only in the Triune Lord God, and in the works and merits of the Lord + Jesus. He has accomplished all that is necessary for our salvation by His perfect obedience to the Law of the Lord God, and by His innocent suffering and death upon the tree of the holy cross. He would have us strengthened in our faith not only by knowledge of this fact, but by our continual faith in Him. He would have us cling to His promises in faith. This is how we bring forth fruit through patience.

But as we heard in the parable of the Sower of the Seed, not all people receive the Word of God with gladness and hope. Our Lord instructs us today, the Church, how different people will receive the Word. He does this so that we may not get discouraged when that person we hoped would hear and receive the Gospel does not. Our Lord in His parable lists four different kinds of soil: the wayside, the rock, the thorns, and good ground. These soils are listed in descending order of rejection of the Word of the God. They are listed in order of most fierce resistance to the Word of God to the most receptive.

The Seed that fell by the wayside did not even come close to reaching soil. It ended up in the road. It was trodden under foot. It was eaten by the birds. We are told by our Lord + Jesus in His explanation of this parable to His Apostles that this Seed is immediately plucked away from hearers by the devil and his agents. They hear the Word of God; they hear the pure preaching of the Word of God, but immediately reject it. For their hearts are ruled by the devil and the world, which tells them that such things are useless to them.

The Seed that fell among the rock has some soil, but it lacks moisture, and withers away from the heat of the sun. This represents those who hear the Word with gladness but fail to understand that in believing on the Word of the Lord God, they have made for themselves a powerful enemy. They have made an enemy of the devil. He wants everyone to be like Seed planted in the wayside. He wants to pluck it away from them before it can take root. But if it does take root, he will use all his evil arts to tempt us away from the truth. He will put false doctrine in front of us to lead us astray. He will put the lusts of the flesh before us. He will do all in his power to lead us into sin and shame. He will do all in his power to lead us into impenitence. Those who have no root, easily wither and die from the heat of the sun of temptation, and fall away.

The Seed that fell among the thorns are choked by the thorns. Note that our Lord + Jesus tells us that the thorns grew up with the Seed. Our Lord in His explanation of the parable tells us that these are the ones that let the cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life choke away their faith. Since the thorns grew up with them, they never truly separated themselves from the world. We are taught by holy Scripture to be in the world but not of it. These have always been of the world. They have not been of the Church. The Church did not really mean anything to them. It was something they did out of habit, or obligation, or because of family. Sadly, they let the world pull them away from receiving true happiness and contentment by the world. All the cares of the world they try to handle themselves instead of finding the answers in the Church, and from the only One Who can actually give them; from the Triune Lord God. They trade the eternal riches of Heaven, for the perishable riches of this world. They exchanged the eternal pleasures of Heaven, for the temporal pleasures of this life. They have

ever lived their lives in this world, never looking forward to the world to come. They do not even consider the world to come; it is to them as a fantasy, or something far off in the future which they can deal with when the time is right.

The Seed that fell on good ground is that soil that fell into good and honest hearts. It brought forth fruit an hundredfold. Our Lord + Jesus says of these ones that they not only hear it, but they hold fast to it. They have heard the call, and they do not scorn instruction and rebuke. They know the treasure that they possess. In the same way that the heavenly Father, and His Beloved Son, diligently search them out and desire to bring them into the Church, they also gladly and willingly cling to their Lord and Savior in faith. They are as jealous and zealous for the Triune Lord God as He is for them. They crave His love and compassion. They long for His mercy and forgiveness. Nothing can separate them from the love of Christ + Jesus. Not even all the persecutions of the world.

And our Lord + Jesus tells us in the explanation of the parable that is exactly how they come to bring forth fruit. They bring forth fruit with patience. Like all the other Seed that was planted into the other different soils, our enemies continually seek to destroy the Seed and the plant that grows. With the first soil, the devil is active in destroying that Seed. With the second soil, it is our own sinful flesh, which cannot resist temptation that drives us away. And with the third soil, the cares, and riches, and pleasures of this world, pull us away from the Church. The devil, the world, and our sinful flesh, our enemies, continually seek to destroy our faith.

This is also true of the Seed that fell in good ground. They bring forth fruit with patience. Patience literally means "long suffering." We are constantly attacked with all of the attacks of the first three soils, but a fourth is added for those in whose honest and good hearts the Word of God clings and grows. We are subjected to persecutions and shame. We are mocked and ridiculed for our faith. We are considered second class citizens. Only someone who is less intelligent would fall for those lies. I am quite sure we have all heard the arguments against the Church, and have endured some form of persecution.

But by the Lord God's grace and mercy we will bring forth fruit with patience. For the power of our enemies pales in comparison to the power and authority of our Triune Lord God. He rules with love and compassion for all of us poor, miserable sinners, not wanting any of us to fall into the evil hands of our enemies. This is why He continues constantly to call us into His Vineyard. It is why He continues without ceasing to plant the Seed of the Word of God into our hearts and the hearts of all those who would cling to Him in faith. And this is why He continues to confirm us in the faith which He planted in us, so that we may see that we also love Him as much as He loves us.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us gladly come into this Vineyard of the Church, and receive from our loving and compassionate Lord God His holy Word, so that He may cause it to grow and produce an hundredfold. For by His Word, we will bring forth fruit with much patience, and when our labor in this life is done, we will join our heavenly Father in His Kingdom in Heaven. There we will be reunited with all our faithful loved ones who have gone before us. There we will no longer endure sin and shame; we will no longer endure the attacks of the devil, or temptation, or be concerned with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life. For we will be enjoying the eternal pleasures of Heaven. We will enjoy the eternal liturgy of the Lamb of God in His Kingdom. May the Lord + Jesus come quickly, and take us from this vale of tears to our eternal home in Heaven. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are

heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord + Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same + Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the 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!