

Sexagesima  
St. Luke 8:4-15  
February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
St. Bartholomew Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC  
Fort Myers, FL  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

## He Spake by a Parable

*In Nomine Iesu!*

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

### **Sermon Text:**

“And when a great multitude came together, and they of every city resorted unto Him, He spake by a parable.”

### **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 dearly beloved, our Lord + Jesus, the Christ today speaks to us in a parable. His parable is meant to tell us that He loves us deeply. It shows His great care for us. For like the householder in the parable last Sunday who went out five times during the day to call laborers into his vineyard, showing his mercy and love, so too does the sower in today's parable continue to sow the seed of the Word of God heedless upon which soil it might alight. The Sower, our Lord + Jesus, continues to sow the seed of the Word of God into the world. He continues to sow the seed of the Word of God into our good and honest hearts so that we might bring forth the fruit of faith with patience. And that is what our Lord does for us today here in this place. He is sowing the Word of God into our ears and hearts, so that we might cling to Him in faith and be saved.

He does not do this only through the preached Word. The preacher sows the Word of God into our ears and hearts by preaching the pure Gospel, by preaching the promises of our Lord + Jesus; of His loving kindnesses and His care and mercy for us poor sinners. But our Lord + Jesus is abundantly merciful toward us poor, miserable sinners, for He not only preaches into our ears the saving and pure Gospel, but also imparts His seed of the Word of God through the means of grace. Through Holy Baptism, through Holy Absolution, through the Holy Supper, and through our mutual conversation and consolation with each other as we share our faith in Him and comfort one another in our sinfulness with the promise of forgiveness. Our Lord desires that we hear His Word and cling to its promises in faith, therefore, He is abundant in spreading the seed of the Word of God into our ears and hearts.

“He that hath ears to hear, let them hear” are the words with which our Lord + Jesus ends His

parable. It is not simply a cry for people to listen and take to heart His words, but it is a prayer that we might not fall victim to the preying and prowling of the devil, the world, and our flesh. For these enemies of our souls constantly seek to prevent us from hearing and receiving the Word of the Lord + Jesus. Many people when they hear this parable get caught up in what type of soil they are. The Lord is not concerned about this, He only wants us to hear His Word. The fact that we are even here listening to the Word of the Lord God shows us what soil we truly are. For if we are here to hear the Word of the Lord God our hearts are already good ground, for we desire to receive His Word with good and honest hearts and bear fruit a hundredfold.

But that we are here does not mean that our enemies are stopping their attacks against us. St. Paul in his second Epistle to the Church at Corinth gave us a long list of ways that the devil, the world, and our flesh attack us constantly. He wrote this to the Church at Corinth as a bolster to their faith; to show them that even he had endured persecution and shame on account of the enemies of the Lord God. If we listened to that list of horrors St. Paul endured, we must confess that he was under constant attack from the enemies of the Lord God. They wanted to silence him, and they would do anything to him to get him to deny the faith; to deny the Church and the grace of the Lord God. A thorn in his flesh he was given even by the Lord God to keep him humble and always look in faith to the Lord God, because the Lord's grace was sufficient for him. St. Paul would always be reminded that he persecuted the Church; that he was a murderer of Christians. But this constant thorn in his flesh only served to make him even more faithful to the Lord + Jesus. For he was carried by the Lord + Jesus to the third heaven on the road to Damascus and saw the beauties and glories of heaven. This is something for which he would do anything and endure anything to obtain.

St. Paul told this to the Church at Corinth to encourage them to remain faithful unto death in the midst of persecution; in the midst of the onslaught of our spiritual enemies. This is also why our Lord + Jesus tells us this parable today. He wants us to hear how the devil, the world, and our flesh try to prevent us from hearing His holy Word. He will continue to spread the seed of the Word of God. He will continue to teach and catechize us in His holy Word. But He also warns us the devil prowls around like a roaring lion waiting to pounce upon us and devour us.

Our Lord does this by showing us how the Word of God is received by others. There are those in which the seed is cast into the wayside. It is trampled under foot and devoured up by the birds of the air. These are those who reject the Word of God as soon as they hear it. They have no use for it. They reject it as useless, as false information. They believe that only weak-willed people, who need a crutch to get through life would believe such things. But they do not realize that the devil is at work in their hearts. The devil tramples the Word of God under his foot so that it cannot take root. The devil's angels also come in like birds and devour the seed out of their hearts so that it cannot take root and grow. They listen to the devil and his lies. The devil does not want us to be saved, and so does all in his power to deceive us and mislead us into sin and great shame. He does everything in his power to take the Word of God away from us. In the case of many people, many unbelievers, he succeeds.

The devil also uses our own flesh to deceive us and mislead us. For some seed fell on the rock and could not take root. Therefore, when times of trial and temptation come our way, even as they came the way of St. Paul in the Epistle reading, their faith is not strong enough to endure it. These ones receive the Word of God with joy and gladness, but when trials come, they blame the Lord God instead of their sinfulness and the existence of sin in this world. Their faith is weak because they do not cling unceasingly to the Lord + Jesus, do not go to Him in prayer and study of His Word. They rely on their own gumption to get them through, and they end up failing every time. In times of trial and temptation, our Lord would have us remember His lovingkindnesses toward us. He would have us remember that He is ever diligent in planting into our ears the promises of salvation in Him alone.

But we must also remember that in addition to the devil and our flesh the world is also seeking

to destroy our faith in the Lord + Jesus. The world is the enemy that is most subtle, for it works many times without us being aware that it is working against us. Hear what our Lord + Jesus says about the seed that fell amidst the thorns. The Word of God is choked away by the cares and riches and pleasures of this life. This is why the world is the most insidious because it destroys our faith without even our knowing that it is doing such a thing. For we often find ourselves stressed out about the cares and riches, or lack thereof, of this life. We are constantly being told by the world that our happiness is the most important thing we should be after. This is why we have phrases in our society bandied about like “self-care” and “self-love.” True care and love are never directed inward. They are always directed outward to other people. That is what the definition of love actually is. It is sacrificing yourself for someone or something else.

Our Lord + Jesus shows us true love in that He sacrifices His very self for our redemption. But His self-sacrifice does not begin on the holy cross. He had already shown His love for us in that He laid His divinity aside to humble Himself and come down to take upon Himself our flesh. He humbled Himself to be persecuted and tempted by the devil and the world. He endured shame, mockery, beatings, spitting, and like that makes St. Paul’s sufferings in the Epistle seem like nothing. Finally, He offered up His life as a ransom for ours. He died on the tree of the holy cross in order to redeem us, to buy us back, from the devil, to free us from the torment of sin and death. And He rose again the third day to show us that His sacrifice was accepted by the heavenly Father so that we too may not see nor taste death, but live with Him forever in Heaven.

It is this love for us that prompts Him to continually plant of the seed of the Word of God into our hearts through the means of grace. He loves us enough—His grace is sufficient for us—in that He abundantly draws us to Himself through the promises found in His Word and Sacraments. He has gathered us here in this place to plant the Word of God into our good and honest hearts so that it might produce the fruit of faith, and we might cling to Him and His promises.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us not be shamed by those who reject the Word of God, nor let us fear when trial and temptation overtake us, nor let us be consumed by the cares and riches and pleasures of this life, for these things will all pass away. Our Lord + Jesus has planned for us an eternal home in Heaven. By His sowing of the seed of the Word of the Lord God, He is teaching us to trust in Him and look to this eternal reward of life with Him and all the saints and angels forever and ever. For He desires that we produce the fruit of faith in good and honest hearts. Therefore, He plants the seed into our hearts whenever we gather in this place to hear His holy Word. Let us therefore, my dear friends have ears to hear, so that we might hear that our Lord loves and cares for us abundantly and eternally. 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!*