

Text: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23 Theme: Sower

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

My dear beloved flock, the text for our meditation this morning is the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew chapter thirteen verses one through nine and eighteen through twenty-three.

Farmers today have a wide variety of equipment at their disposal today. There are tractors with a GPS in them that will turn on their own when they are at the end of a field, along with combines that will follow the loader behind them automatically. Farmers are constantly testing, exploring and adapting to the conditions of the soil that they are working with, sometimes even going so far as to plant different crops each year so that the nutrients in the soil stay fresh. Why? All because they want to get the best yield out of their crops for the money and time that they have invested within them. They want to make sure that they do not waste any of the precious seed that they have. In our text for today, our Lord gives to us a parable, the parable of the Sower. A parable is an earthly story or image that is used by our Lord to impart heavenly meanings or explanations. It can be read or explained in multiple parts depending upon which part of the parable one wants to explore. How does the sower in Jesus' parable act?

At first glance, he acts wastefully. He does not test the soil. He does not perform experiments, nor does he make sure that the seed lands where it would be of most use. This sower does not do that. He tosses the seed and it lands where it lands. Some lands on the path and is eaten up by the birds. Some lands on shallow ground and is burned by the heat of the sun. Some is tossed amid the thorns and is choked by them. Still others is tossed on good soil and grows into a great harvest. Jesus explains that this seed is the Word of God sown within the hearts of those who hear it. Our Lord explains that some people simply won't believe, or the devil will take away that which they do have, or they will be distracted by the cares of this world, and still others will indeed hear, rejoice, and bear fruit. Many sermons like to focus on what type of soil people are, but does the type of soil matter? No. Why?

Because if we are being honest with ourselves, we know what kind of soil we are on our own. We are the path because of our many great and grievous sins. Our sinful nature rejects outright anything that has to do with the Word of God. Given the option of sleeping in on Sunday mornings or going to church, that is not even a choice for our sinful flesh. Loving our neighbor and treating him or using him as a means to get what we want, all too often we will use our neighbor to get what we want or covet what they have. There is a reason that 'Keeping up with the Jones.' Is still an idiom in our society today. A late party on Saturday night or even late-night television is more important than being rested up enough to receive God's Divine Service. County fairs, Athletic contests, and other extra-curricular activities are more important than Bible class or family devotions. Basically, there are so many things to do in this world that God's Word becomes an afterthought instead of a priority. If that is our natural state, what then can help us?

Nothing but the Seed, the Word of God working in and on the soil to make it into good soil. The Sower keeps sowing the seed despite the harshness of the soil, in the hopes that the seed will work to produce a bountiful harvest.

By the grace of God, we are made into good soil by what He has done for us. It is noteworthy that Jesus does not use the parable to exhort hearers to "be good soil," as though we could make that happen. If there is any hope for the unproductive soil, it is that the Sower keeps sowing generously, extravagantly, even in the least promising places. God the Father sent His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, He who is the Perfect One, to bear our sins, to die for us on the Cross and rise from the dead. All this He does, in order that you might be transformed from hard and rocky soil into good soil. Through the Waters of Holy Baptism, He calls us His dear and beloved children and faith is created within us that we may do the good things that God has granted us to do. Through the blessed Eucharistic feast, we are strengthened in this identity by Christ's Body and Blood, found in, with, and under, the bread and wine. We are strengthened by the fact that in spite of our many failings, in spite of how imperfect we are, in spite of our sins, our Lord still calls us and invites us to His table, to feast on the great gifts granted to us, the forgiveness of our sins, salvation from death and the devil, and the strengthening of our faith that we may endure the hardships and tribulations of this life.

This parable is a beautiful one even for us today, as we have seen that Jesus' investment in his disciples shows that he simply will not give up on them, or on us! (Yay!) in spite of their, and our, many failings. We trust that he will not give up on us either, but will keep sowing and working on whatever is hardened, rocky, or thorny within and among us. We trust in His mercy, grace, and promise to be with us to the end of the age.

The peace of God which surpasses all understanding, guard and keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.