

## Where Does the Seed Fall in You?

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**Our Savior's Way Lutheran Church**

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

One of the most important things for our Christian faith is to listen to the Word of God. But if we do not understand how to listen or are not trained in how to listen to the message, we can find it hard to pay attention. Not only is it important for our personal growth in good works, but it is also important for the strengthening of our faith. As St. Paul wrote in the letter to the Romans, "Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of Christ" (Romans 10:17).

Our Gospel reading for today is the Parable of the Sower and its explanation. Jesus shared it with the crowds who had gathered on a beach to hear what He had to say. The crowd was so large that He got into a boat so that all the people who had gathered along the shore might hear and understand Him. And Jesus wanted to appeal to their common understanding. So, He taught them using parables.

Now a parable, according to the dictionary, is usually a fictitious story that illustrates a moral truth or a religious principle. It typically compares two things side by side, so that it might provide a lesson of understanding. And Jesus used parables to explain the spiritual things of the kingdom with earthly things that people knew about in their daily lives. And since most of those listening to Him were familiar with planting seeds, Jesus compared the sowing of seeds with faith.

He says, “A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them” (vv. 3b-4). And later in His explanation, we come to understand that when someone hears the Word of the Kingdom of God and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches it away, that we might quickly reject what was sown in our hearts.

And He goes on to say, “Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, [and] since they did not have much soil when the sun rose, they were scorched” (vv. 5-6). Because the seed quickly grows in warm soil, but too much warmth and the seed gets burned. Because, as we heard in his explanation, emotional hearing with its shallow roots only last so long. When there is trouble, the root quickly withers away.

“Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them” (v. 7). Those seeds that were sown had the chance to take root, grow, and mature, but the seed does not bear fruit. Because, as Jesus explains, the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches prevent the word from bringing about what was meant to happen in the sowing of the seed. Things like carelessness, indifference, worry, and materialism can all work to choke out the Word in our lives. Because the way we live also affects how we hear God’s Word.

Each one of the seeds so far in our parable was unable to bring about a greater understanding of the faith and good works that God wants to see come about in our lives. Why? Because there is an unholy trinity that stands opposed to God’s divine will. The devil is alive and well when he schemes to cause division and destroy our souls. He even knows that Proverbs 14:12 says, “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.”

It reminds me of a story about an old man who felt unfulfilled his whole life and had been concerned about money. One day, feeling

unfulfilled, he decided to get some advice from a rabbi. After speaking with the rabbi, the rabbi led him to a window. And the rabbi said to him, “Look out this window, and what do you see?” The man looked out and saw a busy street, and replied, “I see a busy street filled with people—men, women, and children.”

Then the rabbi took him to a mirror. “Now what do you see?” The man replied, “I see myself.” Then the rabbi said, “Behold, in the window there is a glass, and in the mirror there is a glass. But the glass of the mirror is covered with a little silver, and no sooner is the silver added than you cease to see others, and you see only yourself.”

The world often distracts us with all sorts of things. The desire for wealth, power, and glory can consume our lives. The world constantly holds out things promising us happiness. That is why it always seems like we need just a bit little more to make us happy. And it is the love of these things that cause us to sin. And the love of money distracts us and causes us to sin. Because as St. Timothy wrote, “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many [griefs]” (1 Timothy 6:10).

And yet, because of our sinfulness, we can find ourselves in a constant struggle with God’s Will for our lives. We often look to ourselves or experts that we find on the internet to answer many questions that come about in life. We want explanations for things that are not explained. We search for answers because advice and wisdom can seem varied. When an answer does not seem right to us, we simply look for another one that does, rather than looking to God and His Will for our lives. Maybe that is why King David reminded us that God alone is the One who provides us with security and hope. As he writes in Psalm 62:2, “For He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken.”

Getting back to our parable, it is at this point that Jesus then shares with His hearers, the seed that falls on good soil. This is the one who hears the Word and understands it. Because that seed produces fruit and yields 100, 60, or 30 times what was sown. It speaks to the impressive power of God's Word because when Jesus said this, it would have been very rare to get yields like these. And yet, this parable and its application still have meaning for us today.

God reveals His Gospel message through His Word. It connects us with Christ and makes all the difference in the world. Because Christ, died and rose again for us, that we might be forgiven and have life once again, and have it abundantly. His Word helps us to understand His Kingdom, as well as that power of His Word that springs up within us and bears abundant fruit. And even though the fruitfulness of our Christian lives often stands in opposition to worldly values, His Word works through us to accomplish the purpose for which it was sent.

Jesus finally says, "He who has ears, let him hear" to impress upon all believers just how important it is to hear and listen to what God's Word says. If you do not understand, ask Him to help you hear what He says. Speak to your pastor, or Pastor John, Pastor Dave, and myself if you need help. Speak with another Christian who knows as well. And attend one of our bible studies and learn how God is speaking to you. Pray that the devil, the world, or your sinfulness would not fill your life full of worthlessness. And be the one who has ears to hear what God has to say. That He might use you to bear fruit and accomplish through you, His purposes to the praise and honor of His Holy Name, both now and always.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.