

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The Lord spoke a Parable. The disciples didn't understand. So they asked Him, saying "What does this parable mean?" The Lord answered, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God." So the Words you heard this morning, the Words of the Parable of the Sower and the Seed, are a covering, a wrapping, under which are concealed the Mysteries of the Kingdom of God.

When the Lord finished speaking the Parable, He cried out "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." Having ears, and hearing, are two different things. The disciples had ears. But they could not understand. They heard but could not "hear". So the very Word the Lord spoke remained unintelligible to the great crowd. They left without understanding. But to His disciples, He explained the meaning. He allowed them to hear in the true sense of the word.

And in mercy, in grace, in His great love for you, to you it has also been given to hear. That means that it has been given to you to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom of God. For the Evangelist Luke records the Lord's explanation, that you may know, that you may learn, what the Parable means.

And more than just knowing, the purpose of the revelation of the Mysteries, the reason that the Son of God makes known to you the meaning of the Parable, is that hearing, you apply these Words to yourself. If you truly hear, you will examine yourself in light of the Lord's Words. Consider then, the Lord's Parable, and find yourself in it.

The sower went out to sow his seed. Three quarters of the seed did not bring forth fruit. That is not to say that the seed was wasted. The seed to which the Lord refers is never wasted. It is cast graciously, abundantly, across all types of soil. Some of the seed is trampled, and the birds eat it. It never takes root. Other seed falls on rock, and it sprouted, but died for lack of moisture. Still other seed fell among thorns, and was choked by them. But a small portion of that seed fell on good ground, and that seed yielded a miraculous bounty.

The seed is the Word of God. The Prophets of Old proclaimed that Word. Christ is the True Sower. And Mystery of Mysteries, He is also the Seed. He is the Gospel Incarnate, the Word made Flesh. He gave His Word to the Apostles and Evangelists to preach to the ends of the earth. So the sower is the preacher. His job is to broadcast the seed, to preach Christ, far and wide.

The sower does not worry about the soil upon which it falls. He does not concern himself with trodden paths or rocks or birds or thorns. Truth be told, the seed isn't his. He is only the sower. So he sows. He preaches. He preaches Christ, the Seed of the woman, the center of all Holy Scripture, the Incarnate Word. The preacher preaches Christ and Him crucified and risen for the life of the world. The seed is spread, and God works the increase when and where it pleases Him.

Not all who hear believe. Truth be told, only a remnant, a few out of the great multitude, believe. Faith, and the works that follow faith, are the fruit. For seed is sown, but not plants, rather men are brought forth. From some the devil takes the Word from their hearts. They

would not believe. They sought a different truth, which is no truth at all. The seed is good. The Word is efficacious. But their hard hearts prevent the Word from working.

Perhaps you have known someone like that – someone who has clearly heard the Gospel, but has rejected it, and continues to live in sin. That is the devil’s work. He obscures the Word, he perverts the Word, he twists the Word and their heart remains empty, and so they are not saved. They perish. And that for eternity.

Others seem to receive the Word with joy but quickly fall away. Their stony heart prevents the Word from taking root. In the time of temptation, which will always quickly follow conversion, for that is how the devil works, in the time of temptation they fall away. They are not saved. They perish. And that for eternity. Many empty pews this morning testify to this.

Some hear, and the seed seems to take root. But mammon chokes out faith. Worries and pleasures overtake their hearts rather than the Word. They grow to live for this life rather than the life to come. They prefer the shiny objects this world offers to the true riches of the Kingdom of God. They are not saved. They perish. And that for eternity.

Have you heard? Have you found yourself in the Parable yet? Have you been the seed that fell on the path, the seed that fell on rock, the seed that fell among thorns? Have you received the Word of God, and put the things of the fallen world behind you? Have you rejected the mores and falsehoods and fallen sensibilities and perversions of this sin filled world?

Or have you been tempted. Have you preferred to conform yourself to this sin-filled world, to fit in? Have you been persuaded by the twisting of the Word to prefer a god that gives you what you want when you want it? In time of tribulation, in time of temptation, in time of testing, has your faith withered? Have you been choked by the cares and pleasures of this world?

Beware, for as God warned Israel, where there is unrepentant unbelief, He takes away His Word. Beware, for the Lord Himself teaches, “...as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age.” Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

Take heart, dear Christian. Be not afraid, O Redeemed of Christ, for the life is in the seed. Paths, rocks, and thorns cannot bring forth life. But the seed can. In mercy, in grace, in love Seed is sown, and men are brought forth. Good seed, the seed of the Word of God is sown, and believers are brought forth, you who have saving faith in Christ Jesus, the Seed of the woman.

And the bounty of the Gospel is the miraculous hundred-fold crop of the One, Holy, catholic and Apostolic Church, the sum total of all those who have saving faith in Christ our Lord.

By the shedding of His Blood, by His watering the earth with the Blood and Water, all your sins are forgiven. By the work of the Holy Spirit and the power of the Gospel, hearts of stone are converted to good ground. Rocky, thorny hearts are plucked out, and the fertile soil of a living heart is brought forth by the seed of the Gospel and the water of the Baptismal Font, the quickening moisture that gives you life. And in that heart, in your heart, in the clean heart of faith, the Word dwells, making your heart noble and good.

You hear and believe, and in faith you keep the Word in your heart and mind, and so bring forth fruit with the patience that faith alone can yield.

So you do not suffer from the famine that the Prophet Amos warns against, the famine that comes when the Lord takes away His Word. You have His Word. It is written in your heart and in your mind, for you are heirs of the New Testament.

You hear and believe, and you eat Christ. For the Seed of the woman, the Seed who fell from the tree of the cross to be buried deeply in that garden tomb, the Seed that sprang forth to new life on the third day, places His Body and Blood with earthly elements that you feast on Christ, the Seed, the Word made Flesh, for the forgiveness of your sins, and the strengthening of your faith. And miracle of miracles, you are the hundred-fold crop worked by the Mysteries of God.

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