

Lectionary Bible Study – Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

The Christian is planted by the Word and produces fruit. The seed of God's Word has been planted in your heart, and by the Holy Spirit's power and help, you receive it with joy, bringing forth fruits of faith, hope, and love.

GOSPEL LESSON – Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake.

² Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. ³ Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed.

⁴ As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵ Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. ⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop--a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. ⁹ He who has ears, let him hear."



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¹⁸ "Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: ¹⁹ When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. ²⁰ The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹ But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away. ²² The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. ²³ But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

1. What is a parable, and how are we to read it?
2. What is Jesus' main point in this parable? In other words, who does the action and what's he doing?
3. How would you assess the farmer's seed scattering technique?
4. Check out Jesus' own interpretation of the parable in verses 18-23. The scattered seed endures attacks from three different enemies. What are they?
5. Where, then, do our responsibilities as Christians lie? What are we able to do, and what aren't we able to do? Lutheran hymn writer, Martin Franzmann penned these words:

<i>Preach you the Word and plant it home</i>	<i>Though some be snatched and some be scorched</i>
<i>To those who like or like it not,</i>	<i>And some be choked and matted flat,</i>
<i>The Word that shall endure and stand</i>	<i>The sower sows; his heart cries out,</i>
<i>When flowers and mortals are forgot.</i>	<i>"Oh, what of that, and what of that?"</i>
6. This parable shows the relationship between the Word and the individual. Where is the emphasis? It's on the seed and the sowing – paying attention to the Word and receiving it. The soil is nothing, dead until the seed is sown. Seed is what brings the soil to life. What applications can we make from this parable?

FIRST LESSON – Isaiah 55:6-11

⁶ Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near. ⁷ Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon. ⁸ “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. ⁹ “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. ¹⁰ As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, ¹¹ so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

7. “Show God your face, not your back!” From what did Isaiah urge the people of Judah to turn, and whom does he implore them to seek?
8. How do verses 8-9 help us to come to terms with what looks like an inconsistency – that God rules over all things, yet his people still face hardship?
9. To what does the LORD compare his Word? What’s the point of the comparison?
10. True/False: Whenever we proclaim God’s Word, we can be certain that our listeners will be brought to faith and they’ll immediately change for the better.

SECOND LESSON – Romans 8:18-25

¹⁸ I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. ¹⁹ The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. ²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. ²³ Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

11. Reread Paul’s words in verse 18. How do his words put our hope on heaven and simultaneously enrich and embolden our lives right here and now?
12. What are we awaiting? What is creation awaiting?
13. When will all of this happen? Look closely and see the perfect undoing of the curses pronounced after the Fall into Sin in Genesis 3.
14. We live every day on the basis of God’s _____.