

July 13, 2014
 Sermon for The Fifth Sunday after Pentecost
 St Peter Lutheran Church
 Bowie, TX
 Larry Knobloch, Pastor
 Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23 (ESV)

J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus

Matthew 13:1-9 (ESV)

¹ That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. ² And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. ³ And he told them many things in parables, saying: “A sower went out to sow. ⁴ And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. ⁵ Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, ⁶ but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. ⁷ Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. ⁸ Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹ He who has ears, let him hear.”

Matthew 13:18-23 (ESV)

¹⁸ “Hear then the parable of the sower: ¹⁹ When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. ²⁰ As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, ²¹ yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. ²² As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. ²³ As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”¹

¹ *The Holy Bible : English Standard Version*. Wheaton : Standard Bible Society, 2001

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

Amen.

Jesus' parable of the sower is very familiar to most who have ever made their way through the doors of a church. The sower sows seeds that fall into all sorts of ground. The parable prompts us to ask the question: what burden is deep within your heart?

Jesus mentions people that are held back by the cares of the world, and there are many cares that trouble us. But again, what is in your heart? Is there a troubled relationship deep in your heart? Is there a relationship at home or work that troubles your heart? Is there someone here in church this morning that you don't wish to find the peace of God? Deep in our hearts, we sometimes find troubled relationships in our marriage and family. Even Adam and Eve faced troubles after sin entered the world. In fact, some of the first words that are recorded of Adam speaking of Eve are the ones to God, blaming her, saying, *"The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."* Any marriage, no matter how strong, fights against sin.

Another care in this world that weighs on us is our health. You or someone you know is struggling with something. Be it cancer, heart disease, joint problems, macular degeneration. Or maybe it is an addiction of some sort...these all add to the health worries.

Jesus also mentions riches and being deceived by them. Maybe your finances cause you worry, drowning out God's Word. No matter how much or how little you have, there is always going to be concern about finances.

As we watch oil and gas prices continue to rise, bringing up food and other prices, the cry of “if only I had more money” rings out. Rather than trusting that God will provide. That is the deceitfulness of riches.

For some of you, life may be sailing along just nicely, thank you very much. Well that’s great news, but we will get back to you later.

Now that we have gone through some of the burdens of our heart that keep us from hearing God’s Word clearly, lets get to the point of this sermon. As deep as your worries and burdens might go, God is deeper.

If you let Him rule in your life, going deeper than your problems, you will be amazed at how light your problems can become. Hebrews 1:3 tells us that God is our Savior, “*who sustains all things by the Word of His power.*”

Troubled relationships? Jesus knows them.

Financial worries? Jesus depended on the kindness of strangers.

Illness? Jesus knows illness, for that matter, He defeated death.

Yes, Jesus has death covered.

He was persecuted and died for your sins for the world’s sins, for the sake of all sinners. You can’t get any deeper than that. Jesus conquered death, every kind of death. His Spirit gives us life in a place of spiritual death and His resurrection guarantees the resurrection of our physical bodies and saves us from eternal death and the fires of hell.

Now remember when I mentioned those folks who are sailing along just fine? Well verses 20-21 are talking to you.

“As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy,²¹ yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away.”

It is during the most prosperous times in our lives, when we should be living in joy and thanksgiving to God, that we ignore God the most. We are doing fine and as humans, we tend to give ourselves the credit and forget to thank God for our blessings. So we carry along, merrily on our way... until a tragedy strikes.

Be it death or illness, loss of job or trust fund, something is going to knock us down when we least expect it. If we have laid no roots in God's Word, we will indeed shrivel up and fall away just like the plants that sprouted from the seed that fell on rocky ground. God tells us in Ecclesiastes 12:1, *“Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, “I have no pleasure in them”;*

Root yourselves in God's Word, and again, on His account, you will not fall.

Whatever might be going on in your lives, we all need a deeper understanding of God's Word. Let me point out something obvious. A seed is something we can hold on to. Something we can see and feel. We take it and plant it in the ground. Again, something we can see and feel. It is physical labor that plants seeds, crops aren't raised with ideas.

In the same way, the Word of God is a physical thing. It is being spoken from a mouth. The vibrations from my vocal chords are making waves in the air which are going into your ears and striking your ear drums.

I pray that this Word of God runs through your brain and into your heart. The same thing when you read your Bibles. Your eyes see the words, interpret what you are reading and again, goes into your heart.

God's Word gets into your system, into your heart by physical, ordinary means and once in your heart does some extra-ordinary things as the Holy Spirit causes those seeds of God's Word to sprout and grow.

God gave you those physical gifts of eyes, ears, mind and heart. He also gave you the gift of His living Word so that you could hear of His law and learn of your Savior. Take the time and use those gifts to the glory of God

So, we've talked about the physical labor of hearing the Word. You hear it from your pastor, you read it in the Bible and your daily devotions, but where does it go from there?

We have been speaking of sowers and the seed, the men studying to be pastors, pastors, evangelists and teachers in the field, serving in Christ's church heading out to be sowers, leading and equipping to be sure, but you are called too, to be right alongside of them as we all do our best to follow the great commission given to us by Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20,

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you..."

May we all do our best to follow that commission of Christ. Not for our salvation, as He has already won that for the world, but out of gratitude for our Savior, who gave it all so that we might have life eternal in His name.

And remember, He didn't just send you and drop you off at the curb, Jesus closed with these very words, "*And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*"

We are called to do; to be witnesses, to support the church; her pastors and earthly things, to proclaim God's Word to the nations, but never lose sight that the Word that you are proclaiming, the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, is yours too. When you don't do as you should, that grace and mercy won on the cross by Jesus Christ, was won for you too.

Through faith in Him as your Savior, you have the free gift, the promise of eternal life. In Jesus' name,

Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Amen.

