**Matthew 13:1-9,18-23**

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.” **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.”

**“Entrusting My Life To The Word”**

 Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. There are many parables in the Gospel accounts, but chief among them is the Sower and the Seed. Some have even called it, “The parable of the soils.” The first thing to note is how Jesus told this parable to the crowd, but later explained it to His disciples. They came to Him asking, “Why do you speak to them in parables?” (vs.10). In explaining this parable, they were to see that spreading the word of the kingdom was going to be frustrating. They witnessed firsthand how this happened during the earthly ministry of Jesus. Rather than discouragement, the key for sowing was in the seed bringing forth an abundant crop on some good soil.

 Of course, the second thing to note is when we hear about the different soils. It is natural to think, “Wait a minute I do not want to be any of that bad soil, but the good soil.” How easy to want to go off and make ourselves into good soil, when it has always been a gift of grace purely worked by God’s Word! The Catechism states, “I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to Him, but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith…” God loves sowing, so we have hope to receive what He gives by His Word. There is plenty of bad soil, but the seed still brings an abundant crop because that Word is Christ.

1. **What goes wrong with the bad soil is not the fault of the seed**.
2. The path is just plain hard refusing to understand what was given.
* Today we would say, “It is what goes in one ear and out the other.”
* Whenever we have not taken the Word seriously, be assured the Devil was more than eager to snatch it away.
* Plenty of false teachers and philosophies of man are at work hardening hearts to be against the Word once received.
* Even the default answer for today is to shut our ears to everything, which still ends up cutting us off from Christ and His Word.
1. The rocky ground appears strong, but is weak without any depth.
* Today we would say, “Easy come and easy go.”
* Our current western world is witnessing such withering because for a while the Christian faith was convenient, but no longer.
* What was at first easy to receive from the Word collapses before adversity, because during the joyful time roots did not grow.
* Initial excitement is good, but unstainable because God shows us how quickly our faithfulness dries up before the cross.
1. The overrun soil finds that the thorns choke out any fruitfulness.
* Today we would say, “Trying to keep up with the Joneses” or maybe more like that reality TV show, “Keeping up with the Kardashians.”
* The obvious problem is overcrowding that comes from cares of the world and riches.
* So many worries and glories with life that come and go, but they always seek to push out Christ and His Word so there is no fruit.
* Lots of busyness and places to be, but the cost can feel like the prick of thorns against the Gospel leaving it empty in our lives.

Plenty of discouragement from the bad soil, but God’s Word is His grace at work for us to hear, understand, and be fruitful.

1. **What goes right with the good soil is the gift promised by the seed.**
2. Christ comes to expel the devil so understanding His Word is the gift.
* The Father claimed you in Christ by baptism so that you are no longer hardened slaves in the heart, but “you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons…”
* We can take the Word seriously, because it is Christ seriously who speaks up for us with no hardness in His heart.
* Continuing to hear God’s Word is having the Law bury us by repentance, but what arises are forgiven saints trusting in Christ for our life.
* We dare not shut out what Jesus declares against the Devil for us, “I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand” (John 10:28)
1. Christ displays His weakness as strength so being rooted in His Word is the gift.
* There was nothing easy about the sacrifice needed for sinful humanity, but the Father sent His Son to be rooted in our salvation.
* It meant following the course of Scripture, which was to be the Suffering Servant and Jesus never had second thoughts about it.
* Even when everything would be stripped away, you know how deep those roots of being Savior went for Christ prayed, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.” Luke 22:42
* No convenient Christianity, but our Savior promises the depth of His Word is faithful to keep us from withering and even turns sorrows into joy.
1. Christ provides a glorious victory so fruitfulness pops up for His Word is the gift.
* Whether it is thirty, sixty, or a hundred the good soil produces, because the good seed carries that blessing.
* The risen Jesus sent out the Word of His kingdom to clear out the overcrowded ways of men with fruitfulness that comes from Him.
* Against the care and glories of life Christ says “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matthew 6:33).
* Christ by His Word and sacrament is what preserves you as good soil righteous in Him not leaving you empty, but fruitful.

 The parable of the sower expands what so many want to just figure is either faith or unbelief. Instead, Jesus gives an answer to the frustration over the Word because many at first do believe, but end up falling away. The fault does not rest with the Sower or the seed for both are consistent and generous to sinners. However, if faith remains this truly is the grace of God at work in Christ who carries the power to produce good soil. There is plenty of bad soil, but the seed still brings an abundant crop because that Word is Christ. Amen. Now the peace of God, which passes all understanding, be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.