

WHAT KIND OF SOIL ARE YOU?

(MATTHEW 13:1-23)



In today's Gospel, Jesus tells the parable of the sower and seed. He uses images that would have been familiar to people living in the fishing and agricultural economy of Galilee.

A sower goes out to sow seed. He scatters it generously. Some falls on the edge of the path and is eaten up immediately by birds. Other seeds fall on a rocky patch, where they spring up straight away, but quickly wither because there isn't enough soil for the roots to take hold. Some fall among thorns, which grow up and choke them. Others fall among rich soil and produce an abundant crop.

Jesus explains that the seed is the word of God, which he scatters generously. It is available for everyone to respond to. But whether God's word will take root and bear fruit depends on the condition of the ground. It depends on how open people are to receive it.

Jesus describes four types of hearers. The first are those who hear the word of God but they do not really understand it and are easily led astray by evil influences. The second are initially very enthusiastic but fall away as soon as trials and difficulties arise because God's word has never taken root in them. Third are those who hear the word but are distracted by the worries and cares and riches of this life. The final type are those who listen to God's word and take it to heart, and respond by applying it to themselves in an effort to lead a life like that of Jesus. They will yield a rich harvest.

God's word is still scattered generously today. The question is, how well do we respond to it? How firmly does it take root in us? Are we people like the fourth group of hearers, who listen to the word of God, take it to heart, make it their own and have it bear much fruit? ■

DO

Think about it. What seeds are you sowing? What values, attitudes and qualities are you planting in your children, in your family, your friends and workmates? What kind of harvest are you producing?

SAY

“Lord, help me to receive your word with an open heart and let it bear fruit in my life. Amen.”

PRAY

Pray for all Christians that they might draw others to God by the kind of lives they lead.

LEARN

The Christian is nourished by the breaking of bread and the breaking of the word.

The one who hears the word of God and lives it will produce good fruit.

By their fruits you shall know them.



REFLECT

We all would like to think that, when our time comes, we will have left a mark, a legacy, a sign that our lives were not in vain, that our impact on this earth was for the better. Some people have carved their names in history through the works of art or the inventions they created. Others have made their mark in the world of sports or politics or religion, or as great thinkers or explorers or leaders. Every generation

has produced individuals of renown, who used the talents they were given to yield a rich harvest. Think of the impact the seventeen-year-old Swedish campaigner Greta Thunberg is making in the area of climate activism.

All of us have been gifted and talented in one way or another. Hopefully, we are using those talents to the best of our ability, even if our names will never be

in the history books. As Christians, we have been tasked with something even more important – to cultivate the seed of faith that has been planted in us so that it bears wonderful fruit. We do that by letting God's word ground us and shape us. We do it by the example of our lives – the values we hold, the words we speak, the actions we take. We do it by witnessing to the Gospel, in every moment of every day. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

As for me, in justice I shall behold your face;
I shall be filled with the vision of your glory.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who show the light of your truth
to those who go astray,
so that they may return to the right path,
give all who for the faith they profess
are accounted Christians
the grace to reject whatever is contrary to the
name of Christ
and to strive after all that does it honour.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING Isaiah 55:10-11

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.
Thus says the Lord: "As the rain and the snow
come down from the heavens and do not
return without watering the earth, making it
yield and giving growth to provide seed for
the sower and bread for the eating, so the
word that goes from my mouth does not
return to me empty, without carrying out my
will and succeeding in what it was sent to do."
The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 64

Response:
Some seed fell into rich soil,
and produced its crop.

1. You care for the earth, give it water,
you fill it with riches.
Your river in heaven brims over
to provide its grain. (R.)
2. And thus you provide for the earth;
you drench its furrows,
you level it, soften it with showers,
you bless its growth. (R.)
3. You crown the year with your goodness.
Abundance flows in your steps,
in the pastures of the wilderness it flows.
(R.)

4. The hills are girded with joy,
the meadows covered with flocks,
the valleys are decked with wheat.
They shout for joy, yes, they sing. (R.)

SECOND READING Romans 8:18-23

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the
Romans.
I think that what we suffer in this life can
never be compared to the glory, as yet
unrevealed, which is waiting for us. The
whole creation is eagerly waiting for God to
reveal his sons. It was not for any fault on
the part of creation that it was made unable
to attain its purpose, it was made so by God;
but creation still retains the hope of being
freed, like us, from its slavery to decadence,
to enjoy the same freedom and glory as the
children of God. From the beginning till now
the entire creation, as we know, has been
groaning in one great act of giving birth; and
not only creation, but all of us who possess
the first-fruits of the Spirit, we too groan
inwardly as we wait for our bodies to be set
free.
The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
Speak, Lord, your servant is listening;
you have the message of eternal life.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL Matthew 13:1-9
(longer form Matthew 13:1-23)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Matthew.
Jesus left the house and sat by the lakeside,
but such crowds gathered round him that he
got into a boat and sat there. The people all
stood on the beach, and he told them many
things in parables.
He said, "Imagine a sower going out to
sow. As he sowed, some seeds fell on the
edge of the path, and the birds came and ate
them up. Others fell on patches of rock where
they found little soil and sprang up straight
away, because there was no depth of earth;
but as soon as the sun came up they were
scorched and, not having any roots, they
withered away. Others fell among thorns, and
the thorns grew up and choked them. Others
fell on rich soil and produced their crop,
some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.
Listen, anyone who has ears!"
The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.
For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Look upon the offerings of the Church, O Lord,
as she makes her prayer to you,
and grant that, when consumed by those
who believe,
they may bring ever greater holiness.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The sparrow finds a home,
and the swallow a nest for her young:
by your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and
my God.
Blessed are they who dwell in your house,
for ever singing your praise.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having consumed these gifts, we pray, O Lord,
that, by our participation in this mystery,
its saving effects upon us may grow.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

"Truly a faithful friend is the medicine of life.
Truly a faithful friend is a strong defence.
For what will not a genuine friend perform?
What pleasure will he not afford? What
benefit? What security? Though you should
name infinite treasures, none of them is
comparable to a genuine friend."

St John Chrysostom