

7/10/11

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY Blessed Lord, since You have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Isaiah 55:10-13

(Isaiah instructs in the power of God's Word.)

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.

12 You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. 13 Instead of the thornbush will grow the pine tree, and instead of briars the myrtle will grow. This will be for the LORD's renown, for an everlasting sign, which will not be destroyed."

THE GOSPEL LESSON Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

(Jesus' parable instructs about the Power of God's Word.)

1 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.**" . . .

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 VEn th/| h`me,ra| evkei,nh| evxelqw.n o` V|hsou/j th/j oivki,aj evka,qhto para. th.n qa,lassan\

On that day, leaving his house, Jesus sat by the sea.

2 kai. sunh,cqhsan pro.j auvto.n o;cloi polloi,(w[ste auvto.n eivj ploi/on evmba,nta kaqh/sqai(kai. pa/j o` o;cloj evpi. to.n aivgialo.n ei`sth,keiÅ

And a large / many crowd gathered to him so that he embarked / put out sitting in a boat, and the whole crowd stood on the shore.

3 Kai. evla,lhsen auvtoi/j polla. evn parabolai/j le,gwn\ ivdou. evxh/lqen o` spei,rwn tou/ spei,reinÅ

And he said many things to them in parables, saying, "Behold the sower / farmer went out to sow.

4 kai. evn tw/| spei,rein auvto.n a] me.n e;pesen para. th.n o`do,n(kai. evlqo,nta ta. peteina. kate,fagen auvta,Å

And while he was sowing some fell along the way/path/road, and the birds ate / devoured it.

5 a;lla de. e;pesen evpi. ta. petrw,dh o[pou ouv k ei=cen gh/n pollh,n(kai. euvqe,wj evxane,teilen dia. to. mh. e;cein ba,qoj gh/j\

but other fell on the rocky ground where it did not have much earth, and immediately it sprang up, though it did not have depth of earth / ground

6 h`li,ou de. avnatei,lantoj evkaumati,sqh kai. dia. to. mh. e;cein r`i,zan evxhra,nqhÅ

And the sun having risen and it was scorched and because it did not have root it withered.

7 a;lla de. e;pesen evpi. ta.j avka,nqaj(kai. avne,bhsan ai` a;kanqai kai. e;pnixan auvta,Å

But some fell on the thorns, and they came up and the thorns choked it.

8 a;lla de. e;pesen evpi. th.n gh/n th.n kalh.n kai. evdi,dou karmo,n(o] me.n e`kato,n(o] de. e`xh,konta(o] de. tria,kontaÅ

But some fell on the good soil and it gave fruit, on the one hand 100 times, but the other 60, and the other 30 times as much.

9 o` e;cwn w=ta avkoue,twÅ

He who has ears, let him hear.

18 u`mei/j ou=n avkou,sate th.n parabolh.n tou/ spei,rantojÅ

You, therefore, heard the parable of the sower / farmer.

19 panto.j avkou,ontoj to.n lo,gon th/j basilei,aj kai. mh. sunie,ntoj e;rcetai o` ponhro.j kai. a`rpa,zei to. evsparmē,non evn th/| kardi,a| avvtou/(ou-to,j evstin o` para. th.n o`do.n sparei,jÅ

All hearing the word of the kingdom and not understanding the evil one comes and seizes the seed in their heart. This is that having been sown along the path / road.

20 o` de. evpi. ta. petrw,dh sparei,j(ou-to,j evstin o` to.n lo,gon avkou,wn kai. euvqu.j meta. cara/j lamba,nwn avvto,n(

And that sown on the rocky soil, this is the one hearing the word and immediately receives it with joy.

21 ouvκ e;cei de. r`i,zan evn e`autw/| avlla. pro,skairo,j evstin(genome,nhj de. qli,yewj h' diwgmou/ dia. to.n lo,gon euvqu.j skandali,zetaiÅ

But it does not have root in it, but it is for a time, and (when) tribulation and persecution happens because of the world, immediately it falls.

22 o` de. eivj ta.j avka,nqaj sparei,j(ou-to,j evstin o` to.n lo,gon avkou,wn(kai. h` me,rimna tou/ aivw/noj kai. h` avpa,th tou/ plou,tou sumpni,gei to.n lo,gon kai. a;karpoj gi,netaiÅ

me,rimna anxiety, worry, distraction
avpa,th deceitfulness
sumpni,gei choke, throttle, cause to die

But that having been sown in the thorns, this is the one hearing the word, and the worries of this age and the deceitfulness of the riches choked the word and it became fruitless.

23 o` de. evpi. th.n kalh.n gh/n sparei,j(ou-to,j evstin o` to.n lo,gon avkou,wn kai. suniei,j(o]j dh. karpoforei/ kai. poiei/ o] me.n e`kato,n(o] de. e`xh,konta(o] de. tria,kontaÅ

suniei,j understanding, comprehend

That that sown on the good grown, this is the one having heard the word and understanding, and he bears good fruit and produces 100, and some 60, and some 30 times as much.

THE SERMON

“Faith and Truth in a Life of Trials” Matthew 13

He having ears

the word creates faith, but we can harm the word.

Does the medicine work , yes but if we

good gas mileage? Yes, but if peel out, leave car running, overcome

in each case word begins growth.

Prepare our heart for the word

humility, let God be God,

Live depending on his grace, not our foodness.

If you want to bear fruit listen to God’s Word

If you want to struggle, ignore God and do things your own way

LISTEN to what I’m telling you - only gently, sharing the truth, rather than like a frustrated parent who shouts.

Carrot (parable) stick (warning) - what if neither work?

Sam and Jeannie were Christian people who met at college and got married. They had two boys that Sam and Jeannie loved, brought to church, and taught lessons of wisdom for life. However, Jack and Jeff, their boys had different personalities. Jack usually listened to his parents, tried to follow their guidance, and worked hard to make a good life for himself. Jeff was more interested in having a good time than listening. He was more interested in what his others said rather than his parents' wisdom. Jeff often seemed to be struggling. He had trouble at school as a child, and later keeping a job as an adult. He did things his own way, but not listening has consequences.

What kind of life do you want in this world? Do you want a life that when trouble comes you can face that trouble with the love of others, with confidence in the future no matter the outcome? Do you want a life where you can face whatever this world brings? Or, do you want a life in which the trials of life are bigger than you are, and you are at a loss for where to turn and often fall apart? The first kind of life describes Jack, the second describes Jeff.

Actually, that is the choice Jesus is posing in his parable today, and that is the choice Jack and Jeff had. The first life describes someone who displays the fruit of the Spirit. According to Galatians 5 **the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.**" Jesus says, when God's word is planted in good soil, it bears fruit. Facing trouble with the love of others, with the love of God, with the assurance of our eternal welfare is a life of love and joy and peace. When we listen to the Word of God there is not only faith that God loves us eternally in Jesus, that He forgives our sins and saves us forever. When we listen to and believe and seek with God's help to live His Word, there are blessings in this life as well.

When we don't listen, well, we try to face life on our own. So when trouble comes, and trouble does come to everybody in life because of the sin in our world, we face trouble with our own strength, and our own wisdom, and our own resources. That is not the same as facing life with the wisdom and love of the word of God.

Jack, tried to listen to his parents and followed their advice. He wasn't perfect. He didn't always make the right decisions. But, as a man who lived His Christian upbringing he was willing to admit his mistakes, ask forgiveness, and seek God's direction life. But, Jeff often did not listen. He wanted to do things his way. Jeff's parents loved him deeply. They wanted the best for him. They tried to speak to him in love but it didn't seem to work. Finally, one day when Jeff was facing troubles he brought on himself, his mom shouted at him in frustration, "*LISTEN to what I'm telling you.*" But, because his mother shouted at him, he walked out of the house, slammed the door, and did not return . . . at least not yet.

Did you know that frustrated statement from Jeff's mom, *LISTEN to what I'm telling you*, is what Jesus is saying in today's lesson? **9 He who has ears, let him hear.**" . . . Sometimes we follow the carrot, sometimes we need the stick. Or, to put it simply, sometimes we'll listen to good advice, but sometimes we have to be warned about the consequences of our behavior. By telling this parable Jesus does both. Do you want a life of love and joy and peace, a life where God's word bears fruit through you? If so, then be the person who listens and understands, believes and follows the Word of God.

But, in the parable Jesus warns, there are other possible responses to His Word. Sometimes a person's heart is so hard, like a path, that God's Word is not even allowed in. The seed of His Word would have born grown and born fruit, but it is not allowed to enter one's life and so it is snatched away. That is Jesus' warning about the seed along the path. Then, sometimes the word sounds good, and people believe for a little while. But, there is no depth, there are things God says that people just don't want to believe, or refuse to believe, so people have a half committed faith. And when trials come the full wisdom and love of God is not there and the trials seem bigger than God's love. That is Jesus' warning about the seed in rocky soil. Sometimes the Word of God creates faith and people want God's love, along with wanting everything else that life can bring. Those other things seem just as important as God, and the more things we have the more worries we have, and those worries can choke our faith. That is Jesus' warning about the seed among the thorns.

You see, Jesus is gently calling people to believe what His Word says about His love by offering fruit 100 or 60 or 30 times what was planted. And Jesus is also gently warning of the consequences of not listening and not believing. But, . . . what happens if someone doesn't listen to the gentle encouragement, or the warning? What happens if the carrot or the stick do not work? That would have been a question Jeff's mom, Jeannie, would have asked.

Actually, God does have one other final plan to reach the children He loves. He planted or sowed the seed of His Word in another way. John 1:1-4, and 14 say, **1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men. . . 14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.** Jesus is THE Word of God. Jesus is God's best and most personal communication to us. When people would not listen to the prophets, God sent His Son. Jesus went to the cross paying for our sins so people could hear God's plea. *'Don't you know I love you? Please listen. Won't you accept my love?'* When nothing else breaks through hard hearts, sometimes undeserved love melts hard hearts.

Jeff didn't contact his mom or dad for a long time. He drifted more and more. But one night when he left a bar late he had a wreck and ended up in the ICU. He had walked out on his family and didn't expect to see them. But when he woke up in the hospital his mom was holding his hand with tears in her eyes. When he saw her and said with a question in his voice, "Mom?" she sobbed. *"O, Jeff. Jeff I love you, we love you so much. I'm sorry I hollered at you that day. I know you don't want to be told what to do. I just want what is best for you."*

Today Jesus offers you a life of in love and peace and joy amidst this world's trials. He also warns about not hearing, or believing, or following His words of love and life. With tears in his eyes, Jesus encourages you to listen to Him and believe Him, **"9 He who has ears, let him hear."**