**Sower And Seed**

**Luke 8:4-15**

Sexagesima – 02.12.2023

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

How often have you heard this parable and Jesus’ explanation of it? Every year on Sexagesima Sunday at least, and then in your reading of the Gospel of Luke. People try and figure out who the sower is, what is the seed, and what kind of soil they are.

Let’s start with the seed, called the Word of God by Jesus. When you hear the phrase, “the Word of God,” of what do you think? Most people hear that phrase and automatically think of the Bible – Holy Scripture. It is indeed the Word of God. But it isn’t about what we “think.” We need to know what Jesus meant when He said, “Word of God”?

In the first century, only the rich owned books for each one was copied by hand. Furthermore, only what we call the Old Testament had been written. When Jesus refers to that which had been written previously, He calls it “the Scriptures,” or “the Law and the Prophets,” or He would refers to different books simply by the author’s name. I have not found a place where Jesus calls the Scripture the Word of God.

Yes, Scripture is the Word of God! And the message of the Gospel is also the Word of God – but neither is what Jesus means in our text.

Yet, most people impose that interpretation on what Jesus says in our text. The way most people think and the way too many preachers preach, is that the sower is to be all believers, and all believers are to be out sowing the seed – spreading the Gospel.

Yes, dear friends, you and I are supposed to be taking the message of the Gospel to the world. Every single believer is to be sowing the seed, casting out the net, proclaiming the good news of salvation to family, friends, neighbors, and even to our enemies. But this text is not an evangelism pep rally put on by Jesus.

To be blunt about it, you already know what you are to be doing – you are not doing it. You get overtaken by weeds, that is, the cares of this world. In fact, too often, the cares of the world – the weeds – can consume to the point that many don’t take the time for their own spiritual well-being. And even more so, gets in the way of bringing the Gospel into the lives of others.

Then there is the midst of spiritual warfare. Satan is hard at work day and night trying to deceive us in our faith, and certainly discouraging us in speaking about the faith. Look around and see how many challenges to your faith are present. Did you hear about the lady in the UK arrested for her silent pray outside of an abortion clinic? Or maybe you remember hearing about pastor’s in Canada arrested for offering corporate worship during COVID? Add to this the simple fact that many are terrified to speak about faith things because someone might ask a question. Questions terrify because people believe they may not have a good answer. For those reasons, too many say nothing.

Don’t fear the questions. And if you do fear them, then get better prepared to answer them. We have new Bible Studies beginning on March 2nd – join us.

When a talk about the Gospel, questions always happen. Even more questions when people find out I am a pastor – at archery league, in trout streams, even standing in line at the grocery store. I remember conversations at Lambeau field in the middle of Packers games, with as many as eight people sitting around talking about the Gospel – usually before gametime or at halftime. So, do not fear the questions, and know that you can send them to me IF they ask a question the Holy Spirit cannot help you answer.

So, what is the seed? The seed is the Word of God! What is the Word of God? Christ is the Word of God. Christ is the Word of God made flesh and was who sown into the world by the Sower who is of course God our heavenly Father. He’s already been sown.

I know that as we look outside, the planting season seems a long way off, but bear with me for a minute. How often does Jesus mention different seeds in the Bible? Have you ever planted seeds in the garden? Some seeds are easy to see after you’ve placed them in the furrow, while others you cannot see no matter how hard you try. Sometimes, because you cannot see them, you throw a few more over that same area just to be sure.

And what happens from the little seed? It grows into a big plant. How does it happen? It happens underground, unseen, and to be honest, while many scientists and such may explain what happens, we do not really know exactly how it all happens – it is a mystery.

Yet Jesus gives a good explanation when He said, *“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal.”* (John 12:23-25) Yes, a seed must die before it bears fruit.

Now consider the seed that the Sower sows is the Word of God. If it were up to us, the Advent of the Word of God – the Advent of Christ in the world – would have been spectacular and stupendous. God came into the world in the most humble means. God’s Son came into the world, was wrapped in swaddling clothes, and put in a feeding trough for domestic animals. That is the Word of God? It doesn’t look like much.

This parable says that the true coming of the Word of God, even if you do see it, does not look like very much. In fact, when it gets around to do its real work, it is so strange and mysterious that it cannot be found at all – “seeing they may not see.”

The Word of God comes in human flesh – seed has to be covered over with soil. Human flesh is the dust of the earth.

The Word of God suffers and dies – seed has to die before it can grow.

What is the purpose of seed? To grow up and produce fruit! What is the seed in our text? Christ the Word of God incarnate! As Isaiah recorded for us, the Word goes forth from the mouth of the Lord and does not return to Him empty but accomplishes the purpose for which He sent it.

Think about the four things that happen to the seeds. Some gets eaten off the path, Satan tries to digest it and use it for his own purposes and turns it to what birds turn food into.

But the other three all do what seeds do – they germinate and grow. Yes, there are differences in the outcome, but that isn’t the fault of the seed. The Word comes into the world to bear fruit. Christ will bear fruit. He came into the world regardless of what would happen to Him.

Satan tempted Him, but He accomplished His task without sin.

Testing and trials came upon Him, but He held firm to His course to redeem us from our sin.

The cares, riches, and pleasures of this life enticed Him, but He went forward to the cross.

The Word knew that He would be persecuted for His innocence, that He would suffer at the hands of evil men, and that He would die – but He endured it all.

Three days later He was raised again – bringing life eternal to all those who believe – bringing forth a crop a hundredfold.

The Seed is sown – the Word of God comes to bear fruit. Christ accomplishes His task. He builds and strengthens faith. He does not care about the condition of the soil, He is the Seed sown, and this Seed bears fruit. The Word will accomplish the task for which it is sent.

The Word is sown – it is almost invisible! It sounds like pastor Jerabek’s voice – droning on and on and on. What can that voice do? Christ is that Word, it bears fruit a hundredfold, it forgives sins and strengthens faith.

The Word is sown – it is almost invisible. It is hidden in water. The miracle of baptism is the Seed sown – the powerful Word of Christ – Christ Himself present. Hidden from our eyes, Christ buries Himself in you. Christ, the Seed of the Word begins and sustains faith, it is unites you to His death for the forgiveness of sins. It sprouts to raise you to new life, will raise you up on in new life and glory on the last day.

The Word is sown – it is almost invisible. It is Christ’s body although it appears to be only bread. It is Christ’s blood although it appears to be just a sip of wine. Christ the Seed is sown in you and accomplishes great things. Christ feeds you Himself. The Seed – The Word of God – Christ Himself springs up in you bearing a hundredfold, forgiveness, eternal life, salvation, and the strengthening of faith.

Here you are, and the Word of God, Christ, goes forth into you to accomplish His task, growing faith in you even now, as you hear this Word.

Christ chases Satan away, for in Christ, Satan has no power over you.

Christ The Word cleanses you of your concerns over the trials that come upon you.

Christ forgives you for your sinful pre-occupation with the cares, the riches, and the pleasures of this life, and fills you with Himself.

You are being strengthened in faith and life to bear the fruit of faith, for it is the Word which bears fruit in you with patience. It is the seed, the Word of God – it is CHRIST which produces in you a crop – a hundredfold.

Forgiveness of your sins and strength of faith that you might love God and serve your neighbor – that is a crop a hundredfold. Christ the seed produces this in you. Amen.