

It's been a long hard winter but it's over, feels like it, but soon you'll be thinking about spring plantings, perhaps plant some seeds for vegetables, flowers. If you think about it, seeds are remarkable miracles. Lay around for months, seemingly dry, dead. Yet look what happens. A buried acorn becomes a huge oak tree. An almost invisible speck produces lettuce, carrots, tomatoes, vegetables. And kids can ponder that chocolate is a fruit, botanically the fruit seeds from cocoa trees.

In the front of the church, 3 oak trees growing from acorns taken from Germany, 2 acorns from Wittenberg, from the historical oak tree site where Luther burned the Pope's Excommunication paper; another acorn from Luther's Eisleben home.

Seed, in Jesus' parables and various Bible teachings; teach the hidden, miraculous way God works. What appears unimpressive, unimportant, dead; within it, the life-giving Word and command of God, with man's help.

Only 11 verses into the Bible: **God said, Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, fruit trees bearing fruit seed.** Seeds bear the creative, ongoing power of God to sustain man. No coincidence, man's created of soil.

But what did man do? What man does best. Abuse the good gifts God gives; abused the seed, eating that which was not sown for him. So **cursed is the ground; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you.** Trampled hard ground, rocky, lack of moisture, thorns, weeds require constant work. Man would labor hard to eat bread and **dust you shall return.**

But amazing, God announces to Satan a few verses earlier: a Seed will come to restore creation; that Seed of the woman will crush his head. The Seed, promised throughout the OT, like when God said to Abraham, **In you and in your seed all nations on earth will be blessed.** The prophets reminded God's people of this promise, passing from generation to generation.

And when the ground was ready, the angel of the Lord appeared to Mary, sowed the Seed into her womb through speaking into her ears.

Let those with ears to hear, let them hear. The soil in today's Gospel are descriptive of certain people, yet all the soils are descriptive of you. You're soil, hard, beaten down, trampled; Satan attacks and trials cause you to doubt, neglect God's Word. Don't let him win, strive to live Christian against temptations.

You're rocky soil, one moment so engaged with God's Word, so moved to live as His child, then sin makes you stupid. Foolish. Joy to have God's Word, be here, then bored, lazy with God's Word. No strong habits to water faith, life gets busy, gets in the way of God's Word doesn't it. Luther would berate the people in the sermon, you people hear, embrace of the gospel on Sunday and act like swine who've never heard of it on Monday. Like the saying, it goes in one ear and out the other. Strive to live Christian with the Word penetrating your heart and footsteps.

You're thorn-infested soil, caught up in the pursuit of -you, what money can get you, focused on your pleasures, anxious about this and that; Strive to let His Word have it way with you, form your desires.

Consider a sower who sows seed recklessly, seemingly foolish, wasteful to the wisdom of man, to waste good seed in such places. Even we know better than to sow the seed upon rocky soil, hardened, shallow soil. So is God foolish.. or generous? He sows seed where no one expects it to grow; sows His Word upon unworthy soil, amid all the enemies of His harvest, in the face of all the conditions which will compete against the seed. That tells you something about the lavish grace of God!

This sower, this seed, Jesus, His Word. Will it take root in a heart like yours, a heart always eager to do good ...so long as it's pleasant, profitable for you; a heart that always serves, is generous ...so long as it doesn't inconvenience you; a heart that rejects temptations ...so long as those are things you don't really enjoy; a heart that always loves others ...so long as they're easy to love, nice, compliment you, do what you want? Trampled hard, rocky, thorny soil, repent.

That's why the Sower sows so recklessly, why He keeps sowing. The power does come not from you, the soil. It comes from His Word which does not return empty. His Word is power, promise. It does what it says, creates what it calls to be.

A Sower cast the Seed, the Father sends His Son right into the midst of trampled, hard ground to the rocky ground of Golgotha, crowned with thorns, very symbol of the curse. The Seed, the Word became flesh. During holy week, Jesus says, **For unless a seed falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. The Seed dies, bears much fruit.**

He's talking of you, the Seed, the fruit of His death and resurrection sown in you, the soil of your body, watered in baptismal life, sustained in God's creative power, the living, active Word in you. His Word, cannot, not work. The same power, force, authority of **Let there be light**, it happens. Even more, **I forgive you all your sins**, even greater, **I baptize you**, and even more, **This is my body, is my blood**. All this happens, does what Jesus says it does, the most sure things in your life.

The Word of God is truly the most powerful thing in creation. It brings life, overcomes death, makes you worthy to stand in the presence of God, gives you life beyond the grave. It is yours. Greater than our fiercest weapons.

Admiral Stockdale, ranking U.S. prisoner of war in Vietnam. He observed that men who clung to unfounded optimism of the world, focused on themselves, were the men who failed, died as POW's; but those rooted in faith, faced their brutal circumstances head-on, would prevail, are the ones who survived, even thrived in difficult times. You'll find this in all theaters of war, WW2, among POWs, even our own member. You're called to prevail, even thrive in difficult times for you have a living, active Word that accomplishes God's works in your life. Do not fall away in times of testing, trials. Do not be choked by the cares, riches, pleasures of life.

That in good soil, they are those who hearing the word, hearing means doers of the word, **hold it fast** (military term of fight, guard), **hold it fast**, you fight and guard- steadfast, **and bear fruit with patience. Patience**, like watching seeds grow, Christ growing fruits in you, His Word of care, promise, forgiveness, life, eternity. **He who has ears to hear, let him hear.**