

The 7th Sunday after Pentecost
“Understand God’s Word and bear fruit!”
Matthew 13:23
July 12, 2026
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Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this 7th Sunday after Pentecost is from
our Gospel reading, Matthew 13:23.

“23 But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”

So far our text:

He who hears the word and understands it...that’s what makes this person fruitful. The Word of God must be understood to receive its full and great blessings, not merely heard, not merely, received, but understood. God wants all people to believe and understand and be yoked to Him in faith as we heard last Sunday. For the person who is yoked to Jesus finds rest for the soul, rest in Jesus’ deeds of salvation, rest in forgiveness of sins, at peace with God, and strengthened to withstand the evil that will try to wrest faith away.

So we heard in Matthew 11 last week these words:

“28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

The Word of God reveals and teaches who Jesus is, the humble suffering servant who gave His life for the sins of the whole world and took this burden, this huge heavy burden and carried it on the cross! It’s done! And all who would believe this Word of good news of the Gospel are yoked to Him in faith. And no longer bear one’s sins for they are separated from him or her as far as the east is from the west!

That is why Jesus could say that His yoke is easy and His burden is light. He did the heavy lifting that we will nor could ever do. He fought the devil and conquered death! He

rose again to prove it. And gives this understanding now as a gift so that one would be at rest in one's soul.

Jesus gives this gift of understanding to the babes, those who humbly repent and trust with a simple faith in His Word of salvation. To those who trust in themselves and their own wisdom, the darkness and unrest of the soul remains.

So Jesus said last week in Matthew 11:

“I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.”

How does God reveal His truths to some and hide them from others? Through parables – earthly stories which reveal spiritual truth and wisdom. To those who reject Jesus, His Word remains hidden. His mysteries remain unrevealed. Jesus explains to us today in our Gospel reading:

As Jesus said: **“10 And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?” 11 He answered and said to them, “Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.”**

The Word of God is a gift. The powerful Word of God accomplishes its purposes! Through His Word, God reveals the mystery of salvation that it found only in Jesus Christ. It will not return void as we heard in our Old Testament lesson in Isaiah 55.

“10 “For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, 11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”

So, here we have in Matthew 13, the first block of parables. Luke 14-16 has the second block and the third block is found later in Matthew beginning in chapter 22.

Now that we know the purpose of Jesus parables, let's understand them that they would give rest to our souls and guard us from the evil attacks of the devil, the world and our sinful flesh.

We have four different people who hear the Word of God in this parable of the sower. Three different “he’s”.

The first “he” Jesus explains hears but it goes in one ear and out the other – the seed sown on the path that doesn’t germinate but is eaten by the birds, the devil and his demons. This hearing gives no benefit for faith is not created. This person remains lost and condemned.

The second “he” hears and receives the Word of God. Faith is given and the plant begins to grow, but it doesn’t last. What happens? God’s word is forsaken.

“For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.”

Because of the word...the person doesn’t stand on the word of God but it becomes an offense to him. He immediately stumbles. The roots are not deep and strong in the soil. And faith withers.

The third “he” receives the Word of God but faith is choked out from the cares and riches of the world. They become more important than the Word of God. And again, faith dies.

The fourth “he” receives the Word of God and understands it. It is treasured, meditated upon, continually strengthened from a continual hearing of the Word and applying it to oneself in repentance and faith. The fourth “he” nurtures this gift of faith by coming to God’s house regularly because that is where God promises to be found in His Word and Sacraments. This believer receives strengthening through the receiving of Jesus’ very body and blood.

The fourth “he” is not immune from the afflictions, temptations, cares and riches of the world, but will not yield to them and give up what is treasured most – his or her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Instead the fourth “he” recognizes the battle is great, but the Word of God is more powerful. And by that powerful Word of God, he or she is transformed to be more and more like his suffering Servant Jesus and bears more and more fruit of the Spirit in works of love and mercy.

Jesus' apostles were kept in this faith through the constant hearing of the Word of God and the receiving of the Lord's Supper which Jesus instituted for them and for His church. All were kept in the faith except the one who was prophesied to fall away, Judas Iscariot.

Did the apostles have weak moments in their faith? Of course they did. Think of Peter, James and John and the rest who relied on their own strength instead of the Word of God. Did they have complete understanding always? Jesus kept teaching, kept revealing and kept praying for them as He does for each of us.

When Jesus rose from the dead, He beautifully reveals once again what He had been teaching them all along, but hadn't fully understood.

“44 Then He said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.” 45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

46 Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” (Luke 24:44-47)

Thanks be to God He has given you this understanding, this peace of God which surpasses all understanding of this world. And God continues to nourish your faith and continues to open all our understanding to His amazing riches of salvation in Jesus Christ! He promises to help us grow and grow and grow and bear much fruit! All glory to God now and always! Amen.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)