

Grace Lutheran Church @ Wichita Kansas 13 of July 2014 Pentecost V

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

You the baptized have already had ‘the secret to the mysteries of the Kingdom of God’ revealed to you. You have spoken this secret millions of times. The secret to the Kingdom of God is.....Jesus. You know that if you by-pass Jesus, if you depreciate Jesus, if you poo-poo Jesus, you are in the dark, you have no light in you. Where Jesus is the key to the Kingdom of God, there darkness is dispelled. Sin is seen as the horror it is and forgiveness is seen as the sweetness it is. Where Jesus is all in all, there change also happens. Your language changes. Your eating and drinking habits change. Who you hang out with changes. Every fiber of your life is changed by the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. All becomes new. The old passes away. Every day you put to death the deeds of the body.

So, if all Scripture is about Jesus, so too all parables. As even the Old Testament declares (Ps. 78), “I will open My mouth in a parable.” So only in Jesus do parables become understandable. In our Gospel today, Jesus opens His mouth with the parable of the sower. A sower sows seed wildly, recklessly. Much of the seed dies. Only some of the seed bears fruit. What does this parable mean?

Jesus is the Seed, because Jesus is the Word—the Word of God made flesh. Thus, Jesus is sown into the world. Everywhere. All places. Strange places. Places where one would not expect Jesus to be sown. There’s Jesus being sown in the hallways of schools and the hallways of prisons. There’s Jesus being sown texting, face-booking and web-browsing. There’s Jesus being sown at the factory and at the football game. And, Jesus, The Word of God, bears fruit. Always. Remember, preached Isaiah, the Word of God does not return to God void (Is. 55).

Now, from an agricultural point of view, the parable of the sower makes little sense. The sower looks stupid. Who would sow seed on the path where people walk? Who would sow seed on the rocks? And who would sow seed among weeds? This farmer is the proverbial “many straws shy of a bale.” Nothing is going to grow where the seed continually gets trampled and packed down. Little is going to grow having to squeeze through rocks. And, if something good comes up in a weed bed, the weeds will surely kill the plants. Stupid, stupid sower! What on earth is he thinking? What a waste of good seed.

Does this parable reveal a witless God? A stupid Father? No. God the Father doesn't have a predetermined place nor people to whom His Seed, Jesus, should be sown. It's everyone. It's everywhere. Jesus is not quantifiable. You can't run out of seed which is Jesus. Sometimes the fruit born is a great quantity. Sometimes the fruit born is sparse. You the baptized remember these successes of the sown Word, don't you?:

- Noah preached for over 100 years while building a boat. He preached to friend and foe alike. He ended up being a preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5) to only seven people.
- Conversely, Jonah preached for just 3 days in the great city of Nineveh and over 100,000 people came to faith (Jonah 3).
- On the other hand, Lot was a righteous man, living in Sodom among filthy, lawless men (2 Peter 2:7). But, only three seeds took root from Lot's preaching: his wife and two daughters. Sadly, Lot couldn't even convince his two sons-in-law to repent and believe (Gen 19).
- Conversely, St. Peter preached one sermon in Jerusalem and 3000 men, women, youth and babies were baptized that day (Acts 2).

Where's the equity in these histories? One guy does little and the gain is much. Another guy does much and the gain is little. Where's the equity? Noah and Lot would be fired from business for their failures, while Jonah and Peter would be sought out for commercials and writing books and as contestants on *Dancing With The Stars* for their successes.

All of this fruit-bearing happened because of the Seed.....the Seed of the woman Mary. Jesus is the Seed. Sown everywhere. Sown liberally. And, lest someone cry, "Inequity; Unfair," and give too much praise to Peter and Jonah and give undo criticism to Noah and Lot, think on Jesus. He Himself was sown in inequity. Born without sin. Lived without sinning. Yet on His shoulders was heaped all the sin of mankind. Jesus was forsaken of God on the cross. He was sown into the ground. Sown as a kernel of grain.....dead! Why was Jesus treated this way? Because in this way God revealed His righteousness to an unrighteous world. The Seed Jesus falls dead into the ground, but the Seed Jesus is raised up as the first-fruits of a great harvest. Everyone who believes and is baptized is a fruit of Jesus. In some nations the fruit born is great. In some nations the fruit born is little. Fruit 100x or fruit 60x or fruit 30x or fruit 2x is still fruit. It is still the Seed NOT returning void unto the Lord; it is still the cypress coming up instead of the thorn; the myrtle blooming instead of the brier.

Be careful dear hearer. Don't you be of the same mind as some of the hearers that day when Jesus spoke this parable on the Sea of Galilee. Hearing they hear but don't understand. Seeing they see but don't perceive.

- Don't think that because you have been baptized God will not allow tribulation or persecution to arise.

- Don't think that because you sit in the same pew week after week in this place that the evil one isn't trying to snatch faith from you.
- Don't think that the forgiveness you receive in the Body and Blood of Jesus on Sunday is of no value on Monday when you must battle the world and your flesh: where the world scoffs at you being a godly man, for being a stay-at-home mother, for being the best worker to your boss; where your own flesh schemes at how you can get by doing a cheaper job or why you can't act indecently like that character you see on your favorite sitcom.

You see. You hear. You understand. Jesus is the Seed. He is the root stock from whence comes all good trees and fruit. Not only does your faith come from Jesus, but so too your good works---your example to your grandchildren, your patience to your neighbor whose dog barks every morning at 5:30, your suffering among family members for not doing sinful, hurtful things . Everything comes to you through the Seed Jesus. Your adoption as sons of God and your putting to death the deeds of the flesh.

Having this Spirit-given Jesus planted deeply within you, and you safely in Jesus, you are most certainly defended against all evil. Your trust is not in yourself, but in the Virgin's Son, who lives in you and in whom you live and move and have your being. IJN. Amen.

Sent from Windows Mail