

Gospel Reflection

The word of God is caught up in metaphors and parables. The image of seed that falls on different kinds of ground helps us understand how to listen creatively.

Jesus, the Word, bears fruit in all of creation, but best in our lives and hearts. When you hear this parable of the sower and the seed, do you wonder which you are? Sometimes it seems that we are one, sometimes another. Like all metaphors, this parable must be understood intuitively, "with the heart," in order for it to work God's healing grace in us.

Jesus is careful to say that we see with our eyes and hear with our ears, but we understand, not with our head, but with our *heart*.

It is easy to get discouraged. It is easy to be distracted by difficulties and duties in our daily lives. It is possible for the word to be snatched away, even as we struggle to understand. Distractions of every kind prevent the word from being heard. But Isaiah and Paul underline the important point that the word of God is effective in all of creation, including us. Just as the rain waters the earth and will not return to the heavens until it does its intended work, the earth yields its rich harvest and rejoices. Our sufferings, distractions, and wearying work will not prevent us from hearing the word of God and doing God's work if we see with our eyes the beauty of creation, hear with our ears the music of the universe, and understand with our heart that God has made all of this to help us. God heals every ill, calls us back from distraction, protects us from evil, and gives us the grace to hear the word with joy.

It is God's grace that prepares the ground for the seed, watering it, breaking up the clods, making even untilled ground fruitful. When we understand with our heart that this is God's work in us, then even without understanding with our head, we can receive the word of God with the same joyful song of creation in bloom.

KEEPING FAITH FIRST FAMILY FUN

Matthew 13:1-23

E M F K Y S E E D L M S R
C G S E I R E T S Y M E J
C U D Q X T C R L Q M L B
N R Q E H V A G Q J Y B I
Y H O O L E S R E C S A S
S K R W H W H E E S D R A
N N H B D F O H E J R A I
S S Q N U S P N H F I P A
T U F W S O G W K O B Y H
S N I S R T Z H S I D I Q
X W B P X F O Y C B Y I K
B P Q A E Q N O M H U V L
R I C H S O I L R E W O S

Find these words from the Gospel passage.

BIRDS	CROWDS	HEAR
ISAIAH	KNOWLEDGE	MYSTERIES
PARABLES	PROPHECY	RICH SOIL
ROOTS	SEE	SEED
SOWER	SUN	THORNS

Disciple's Reflection & Questions of the Week

*Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
7/13/2008*

*Matthew 13:1-23
Faith-Sharing
Questions of the Week*



Our Lady of the Assumption

435 Berkeley Ave.

Claremont, CA

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Call to Prayer

We begin by calling upon God:

**In the Name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the
Holy Spirit, Amen.**

We then pause for a moment to listen with our hearts to this week's Gospel passage...

The Word of God: *Matthew 13:1-23*

The Gospel according to Matthew

On that day, Jesus went out of the house and sat down by the sea. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd stood along the shore.

And he spoke to them at length in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and birds came and ate it up. Some fell on the rocky ground, where it had little soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep, and when the sun rose it was scorched, and withered for lack of roots."

Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it. But some seed fell on rich soil, and produced fruit, a hundred- or sixty- or thirty-fold. Whoever has ears ought to hear."

His disciples approached him and said, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" He said to them in reply, "Because knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven has been granted to you, but to them it has not been granted. To anyone who has more will be given and he will grow rich; from anyone who has not, even what he has will not be taken away. This is why I speak to them in parables, because *they look but do not see and hear but do not listen or understand.*

"**Isaiah's prophecy** is fulfilled in them, which says: *You shall indeed hear but not understand, you shall indeed look but never see. Gross is the heart of this people, they will hardly hear with their ears, they have closed their eyes, lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their hearts and be converted and I heal them.*

"But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. Amen, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see **what you see** but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

"Hear then the parable of the sower. The seed sown on the path is the one who hears the word of the kingdom without understanding it and **the evil one** comes and steals away what was sown in his heart. The seed sown on rocky ground is the one who hears the word and receives it at once with joy. But he has no root and lasts only for a time. When some **tribulation** or persecution comes because of the word, he immediately falls away.

"The seed sown among thorns is the one who hears the word, but then worldly anxiety and the lure of riches choke the word and it bears no fruit. But the seed sown on rich soil is the one who hears the word and understands it, and who indeed bears fruit and yields a hundred- or sixty- or thirty-fold."

The Gospel of the Lord

Gospel Glossary

Isaiah's prophecy: Jesus quotes Isaiah 6:9-10

"what you see": The coming of the Messiah

the evil one: This term is used in this and later passages to refer to the devil.

tribulation: A trial or hardship

Faith Sharing

Questions of the Week

- What kind of "soil" is my life?
- What can I do to make that soil fertile, so that God's word may take root and bear fruit in my life?
- What sort of harvest is my faithfulness to God's word producing?

Closing Prayer

God our Father,

Your light of truth guides us to the way of Christ. May all who follow him reject what is contrary to the Gospel. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen

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