



Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. **AMEN**

Our Gospel lesson for today is one that is pretty familiar to most of us. It is a parable. And as you know Jesus talked in parables quite often. He was not unusual in this teaching method, as many of his contemporary rabbis taught in this tradition. Sometimes today we often have a hard time figuring out what a parable means, because they seem so complicated. When in all reality, they should be easily understood, as they were not meant to be difficult or complex. Jesus' parables are quite simple and to the point. And so we often want to read more into them than they were meant to convey. Most of Jesus' parables are rather ordinary stories that He used to illustrate spiritual truths.

The second part of our Gospel reading for this morning is called the "Parable of the Sower Explained". So much for simple stories, huh. The disciples did not even grasp the meaning of this one and so Jesus goes on to explain it to them. It is after all an important parable as it is found in all three of the synoptic Gospels.

And so as I thinking about this message I was in a quandary as to who or what to talk about today. Who are we? The sower? The seeds? Or the soil? Certainly, after looking at my own garden this morning, I don't want to talk about the weeds!

So today, I guess I want to use the allegorical approach, as Jesus seems to tend to use it in his explanation. This means that each thing in the story has a

hidden or symbolic meaning. So maybe just maybe this parable is not quite as simple as we might be led to believe.

Personally, I think that we can be all three things in this story at different times in our lives. Here's what I mean. At times we can be the sower of the good news. Other times we can plant seeds of God's kingdom in others as we move along the path of life. We scatter our beliefs as we walk through daily life. Showing, if not always able to tell others about how God is working in our lives. We continue to proclaim the Gospel in word and deed. And above all, we realize that when we let go of the seed, it is for God to grow it in others. This is where the Holy Spirit works in those seeds that we plant. Many seeds that we sew might fall on deaf ears, some may need to hear our message more than once and then again, some people may be moved by the seed right away. Whatever the growth, it cannot happen without our first casting the seed.

Rodney, wanting to be the farm kid he dreamed of, was in heaven when we bought our mini farm in the town of Erin. We had horses, chickens, turkeys and one cow at a time. And with that comes a lot of you know what, manure. From working with animals all those years he would always use a very colorful expression when I would get upset about something not working even after I had tried or done it several times. Calmly he would say, "you have to throw a lot of manure against the barn door before it sticks!" I knew what he was saying, but never really figured out why you would throw manure against the barn door.

But I do know why I am a sower, why I throw out the seeds of faith. I feel called to do that. After all Jesus went to the cross for me, died a horrible death for me and then rose again for me, to give me forgiveness of my sins, eternal and abundant life. Those promises are well worth the little time it takes me to sew seeds wherever I go. And yes, sometimes those seeds do not produce fruit, but then again, I am not in charge of the soil they fall in.

So, secondly, we can at certain times in our life be that soil where others have planted seeds. I know from experience that sometimes even when good seeds are presented our hearts are hard as a path. Other times our hearts are filled with rocks and thorns, but also there are times when our hearts are open, rich with good soil and those seeds sown can grow in us and yield an abundant faith. And so how do we make sure that when we are on the end of receiving

seed, we are good soil? For some it is easy that from moment to moment we can be any of the four soils that the story describes.

To be good soil, we have to be without trash of the world, without stumbling rocks that hinder our way. We need to listen to the Word of God, surround ourselves with people who also want to be good soil and worship God in the quiet of our hearts. Even in our heart of good soil, growth takes time and patience is needed to make the seeds we are sown, grow to maturity and produce good fruit.

And for the last question. . . What kind of seed are you? Some days we can be seeds that grow abundantly in the kingdom of God and other times we can feel old and unable to make our way out of the dirt. And if we are a seed that grows abundantly, what plant are you going to become. Hopefully, not a weed, for a weed is a plant that is not wanted.

Give some thought to the seed within you and describe what it will grow into. Will you be an annual that needs to be seeded again next season or a perennial that comes back into its own each year? Hopefully you will be a Son follower, I mean sunflower (a little play on words? Puny?) and look to Jesus with faith that continues to grow as you read God's Word and receive His sacraments.

So no matter whether you see yourself in this Parable of the Sower as the sower, the soil or the seeds you can have a rich harvest if you just keep your eyes on the one who first told this parable, Jesus Christ.

Let us pray.

Dear Lord Jesus, we thank you that you walk with us in this life. Give us the vision to understand your parables and where they might become our story of faith. Bless all those that sow seeds, have rich soil in their hearts or become seeds to their neighbors. And so we thank you Lord, for all of your creation that continues to grow for your good, until you come again. **Amen.**