

**ST PAUL'S CHURCH (RONDEBOSCH)**

**SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

**12 JULY 2020**

**READINGS: GENESIS 25:19-24//PSALM 119:105-112//ROMANS 8:1-11//  
MATTHEW 13:1-9, 18-23**

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Let us pray

*Lord Jesus you spoke to people in parables and so many looked but did not see,  
listened but did not hear.*

*Open our eyes that we may see,*

*open our ears that we may hear and*

*open our hearts that we may respond to your word in Jesus' name AMEN*

Today's Gospel reading Matthew 13 is the well-known parable of the Sower.

Parables tell a story using something we see every day to help us understand a

spiritual truth that we can't see with our eyes. When Jesus taught in parables,

He used things that the people of His day were familiar with, in other words he

uses ordinary situations of people to bring a certain message across. Here Jesus

use the story of a farmer a picture that all hearers at that time would recognize

because farmers was a common figure in Palestine at that time

If Jesus were here teaching with parables today, they would be different because

our culture is different. There might be fewer stories about farming, and more

stories about computers and social media!

Let us now interpret and unpack this parable and try to understand the

spiritual truth about it and how we can apply it in our own situation.

In our Gospel reading Matthew 13 v 3-8 we read "*A farmer went out to sow*

*seed. As he was scattering the seed some fell along the path and the birds*

*came and ate it,*

*Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil other seeds fell*

*among thorns which grew up and choke the plants and some fell on good*

*soil"*

At first glance this the parable does not make sense. A farmer goes out and sows

seed on a public pathway, on rocky ground, and amongst the thorns. That is

simply wasteful, inefficient, and ineffective. I don't know anything about farming but you will agree this is bad farming and we may be thinking the sower is not much of a farmer. You can't plant seeds among the rocks and thorns or on a path and then act surprised or complain that nothing grew. The story Jesus tells simply does not fit in our world.

**So what does this Parable want to teach us?**

***Firstly: The surprising generosity of God is exactly what the parable of the sower reveals.***

As different as the four soils are they all hold two things in common. Seeds and the sower. The sower sows the same seeds in all four soils with equal toil, equal hope, and equal generosity. The sower does so without evaluation of the soil's quality or potential. There is no soil left unsown. No ground is declared undeserving of the sower's seeds.

The sower scatters his seed carelessly, recklessly, seemingly wasting much of the seed on ground that holds little promise for a fruitful harvest. Jesus invests in disciples who look similarly unpromising. He squanders his time with tax collectors and sinners, with lepers, the demon-possessed, and all manner of outcasts. Yet he promises that his (recklessly, extravagant, wasting) sowing of the word will produce an abundant harvest we can't see with our eyes.

***Secondly*** let us look at the different kind of soils (that presents our hearts)

***A: Some of the seed fell on a path, and the birds came and ate it up.*** Some people hear the truth, but like hardened paths, they do not let it sink into their hearts.

The seed never sinks into the soil and the devil, represented in the parable by birds, gobbles up the seed before it can have any effect. These are those of us who hear and have closed our minds. We are unreceptive. The words just bounce off us. The Word does not penetrate into our shell, or grow in our hearts. Sometimes we hear the word on a Sunday but it does not affect us it does not touch us and we say the sermon /homily/ church was boring.

***B: Next, some of the seed fell onto rocky places.*** These are those of us who hear the message with great joy, but like seeds on rocky soil, we do not let it take root. We seem to be happy to hear about Jesus and His great love, but we

do not let it sink into our hearts. On the outside, we may express great enthusiasm, but inwardly, we do not carefully consider it. **There were great crowds who followed Jesus, but only a few were His true disciples.** When we face pressure or bad circumstances, we quickly forget about God's word. **A true believer follows Jesus no matter what.**

Some of the "rocky" people may be under the misunderstanding that God will take away all of our problems. Therefore, when problems arrive, we fall away. God's word never promises that life will be easy, without any trials. He promises something far better. He promises that He will be **with us** in our problems. He promises that everything will work together for **our good** – and to bring glory to God.

**During this time of the Corona Virus pandemic as we face pressure and heartache remember God is with us in our challenges, in our struggles in our pain and in our sorrow.**

**C: *Still other seed fell among thorns.*** Some of us hear God's Word and start to grow and bear fruit. But soon we become worried about the problems of daily living. We may think if only I had more money and more "things" I would be happy. These wrong beliefs take up all the person's time and energy, just like the weeds steal all the nutrients from the good plants. We do not focus on living for God, so we don't produce any spiritual fruit.

There is nothing wrong with the sower or the seed. The problem is the soil – We the persons who hear the Word. We must trust God to deliver us from our worries and greed so that we can grow in God's Word.

**D: *Still other seed fell on good soil.*** It produced a crop 100, 60, or 30 times more than what was planted. Isn't it great to know that some of the seed fell on good soil? This represents some of us who hear God's word and believe it. We put our trust in Jesus. Our hearts received the message of the kingdom, and the seed will take root, no matter our challenges and circumstances

We last had a Eucharist Service in the Church building in March but God's words (God's seed) are still scattered on different social media platforms Let us continue to nurture these seeds and water it and give it enough sunshine, during this difficult times.

## **CONCLUSION**

Once there was a king who invited his subjects to a banquet. He told each guest to bring a flask of wine and informed each that his wine would be poured into a large wine vat. Each one thought, “What will my small flask of wine mean? I will bring my small flask of water and no one will know the difference. “When the guest were assembled at the banquet, the king summoned his servants to serve the guests with the contents of the vat. Each was served with water, for they all had thought. “What will my small flask of wine mean? I will bring a flask of water instead and no one will know the difference

**What kind of soil are you and I and what are we doing with the seed God is giving us especially during this time of the Corona Virus pandemic**