



St John Lutheran Church

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Text: Matthew 13 1-9 & 18-23

Theme: Good soil produces good fruit

There can be little doubt about the meaning of the parable of the sower, because our Lord in vss. 18-23 gives us an authoritative and straightforward interpretation... **explaining** to us exactly what He meant. **Today's message will** deal with defining good soil and what causes this good soil to bear fruit. **For us here** today, and for all of Christianity... **the** condition of the soil which is the heart, is critical for spiritual responsiveness and fruitfulness.

In vs 23 of our text, Jesus says " **good soil, this is he who hears the Word and understands it; he indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundred fold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.**"//

Good soil then hears the Word of God. **In other words**, this good soil that our Lord is talking about, has reacted to the converting Word of God. **This is fundamental** in our understanding of how God works in our lives. **Lest there be** any doubt at all. **God works in** our lives through His Word! **That is why** as orthodox Christians, we have a theology that is based and centered on the Word of God.

If you want to know why we preach the Word here in church... **if you** want to know why we study the Word at home and in Bible class... **if you** want to know why we steadfastly defend God's Word and all it tells us... **the** reason is spelled out for you by our Lord in our lesson for today.

It is the Word of God that not only changes us from useless, to productive soil... but it is this Word of God which is the power for our salvation. **Romans 1:16** Paul says "**For I am not ashamed of the Gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also the Greek.**"// **God's Word** is how we are converted to a life of faith, so that we believe in all Jesus...**Jesus**... the living Word, has done for us.

It is Good soil which hears the sanctifying Word of God. **After we are** converted to good soil, by the power of God's Word, this Word continues to work in us so that we may live God-pleasing lives. **Paul in his** letter to the Thessalonians ch. 4:3 "**For this is the will of God, your sanctification...**"// **Remember, sanctification** is the life of God in the soul of the believer. **Our God wants** us to grow... **not in** the things of this world which are all around us...**rather**, He wants us to grow but in Him. **That means growing** in all things that are holy, just, and right.

We are to remain in our Lord... **not** just for ourselves... **but** also so that we may serve God's Kingdom as examples to others. **Paul in his** letter to the Ephesians ch. 2:10 "**For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.**"// **It is so** vitally important for you to remember who you are... **for** you are not just ordinary people going about the business of living ordinary lives.

You... each of you has been created new, in Jesus. **You have been** bought back from death and damnation with the very precious Blood of Christ... **and** as such.... **you** are very special and precious beings. **Beings who were** created not just for your own salvation, **but also** to be God's representatives here on earth. **Each of you** is to be

a shining example of just what it means to be in a right and loving relationship with God Almighty. **That is your task and your privilege while you are here on this earth.**

Our Lord tells us that good soil understands the Word. The Word of God can only be understood because of the work of the Holy Spirit. Because of our sinful and fallen nature... our natural disposition is to fight God and the truth He has for us in the Gospel. Paul tells us in Romans 8:7 "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God nor can it be."//

Without the Holy Spirit coming to us through the Word... we are enemies of God...without the Holy Spirit in us, we cannot understand God and we hate Him. Nothing except the work of the Holy Spirit can change a heart from that of hate and unbelief... to a heart of repentance and joy in what has been accomplished for us. The Holy Spirit is the one who softens our hard hearts and changes us into good soil... graciously working in us, so that we can understand the things of God. It is only the Spirit of God who can accomplish these things in us. We, alone could never come to faith. 1st Cor. 12:3 "Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit."//

Now , it is only because of the work of the Spirit in us, that we understand the Word of God in the light of the cross. 1st Cor.2:2 " For I am determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified."// The whole Word of God points to the cross. All of the Old Testament points to the coming of Christ. And all of those who look forward to the Son of God coming and dying, on our behalf were saved... just as those of us who came after Jesus look back on what He accomplished... so that we are saved. There is no other truth that matters one lick.... if Christ and His cross are not the very center of your life you're in trouble. As Paul said, "for I am determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified..."// Jesus is the only truth and all that matters. All else is not worth knowing...for without Christ there is nothing!!

When, because of the work of the Spirit, the theology of the cross is understood and embraced... then and only then, can one live the life God desires us to live. Why is that?? It is because that in this theology of the cross we find out everything about our God. It is this theology of the cross that reveals to us the Love of God who would sacrifice His own Son on our behalf... so that His justice would be met and so that we might live... and live with Him as His children.

It is in the theology of the cross and Love of God, that we are moved to repentance. We are moved to ask God to forgive us all of our sins... knowing that He loves us enough to do just that... because His Son has died in our place. The theology of the cross has removed the barrier between us and our Holy God... so that we can ask for forgiveness with the confidence of knowing, not only that we will be heard... but we will be restored to our place at God's side. And it is this theology of the cross which moves us to live Godly lives, so that we take our rightful place as God's ambassadors to this sinful and lost world.

Our Lord tells us that "good soil lives the Word." The Word is lived when there is an inward change in attitude. First, is the change in attitude toward our God. We no longer loathe God and His word... nor do we fear it or what it teaches. We no longer fear death and dying or God's judgment. Paul again in Romans 8:15. "For we did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry Abba, Father."// God is no longer seen as some strange and unknown being that we are to fear... He is now the One we call Abba... or Dear Father.

The Word is lived when we change our attitudes toward our neighbors... Jesus in Mt.22:39 "...you shall love your neighbor as yourself,"//... Caring about others... looking out for them, and helping them whenever there is a need...sharing Christ as you do so...this, is living the Word of God.

The Word is lived when there is an outward Christian response. **The outward response** of the Christian is to, worship his Lord and his God. **Ps. 26:8 " Lord I love the habitation of your house, and the place where your Glory dwells."/// The Christian does** not dread the coming into church... **nor** is it work for him or her. **Church is the** place where God has a special presence among His people...**He is** here among us, so that we may express their love for Him... **and** so He may express His assurance of forgiveness and love through His Word. **So that the** people of God may receive the very gifts God wants to share with us in Christ!

The outward response of a Christian toward his neighbor is service. **The Christian is** not to hide his light under a basket. **No, the Christian** is to shine for the whole world to see. **Service toward others** is how we are to express our God's love to those who are not of our faith. **Jesus tells us** in Mt. 7 vs.12 " **therefore, whatever you want men to do you, so also do to them.**"//

When we express concern or outwardly help those who are not Christian, **we are** often given an opportunity to witness for our faith. **Just as our** God came to us when we were undeserving and His enemy...**so,** we are to go to those around us who may not be our friends and family... **and** there, we are to display the same love and concern that our God has shown us. **There we show** that we are the people and followers of Jesus Christ!

"**Good soil produces** good fruit," and it is our Lord and our God, who **through the power of His Word,** makes us into Good soil and produces in us good fruit... **that** we might be productive members of His kingdom and be an example to the world around us.... **In the Name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit..Amen.**

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