

Sexagesima (prelent-2)

Hymns: 129, 264, 46, 374

The INTROIT

(Ps. 44:23-26; 44:1)

P: Awake, why sleepest Thou, O Lord?

C: Arise, cast us not off forever.

P: Wherefore hidest Thou Thy face;

C: and forgettest our affliction?

P: Our soul is bowed down to the dust;

C: arise for our help and redeem us.

P: We have heard with our ears, O God;

C: our fathers have told us what work Thou didst in their days.

The COLLECT

O God, who seest that we put not our trust in anything that we do, mercifully grant that by Thy power we may be defended against all adversity; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

The FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 55:10-13

For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

The GRADUAL

(Ps.83:18,13)

P: Let the nations know that Thy name is Jehovah; Thou alone art the Most High over all the earth.

C: O my God, make them like a wheel and like chaff before the wind.

THE EPISTLE

2 Corinthians 11:19 - 12:9

For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise. For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face. I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak. Howbeit whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also.

Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in

perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.

The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not. In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.

It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.

For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me. And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

The TRACT

(Ps.83:13,18; 60:2,5)

P: Thou, O Lord, hast made the earth to tremble and hast broken it.

C: Heal the breaches thereof, for it shaketh.

P: That Thy beloved may be delivered,

C: save with Thy right hand.

The HOLY GOSPEL

St. Luke 8:4-15

And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable:

A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be? And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and

are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

“Out went the sowing one of the to sow the seed of him.”

Luke 8:4-15 — “Out Went the Sowing One to Sow the Seed of Him”

INTRODUCTION

- I. OUT WENT THE SOWING ONE TO SOW THE SEED OF HIM
- II. IS NOW THIS THE PARABLE: THE SEED IS THE WORD OF GOD
- III. IN THE GOOD GROUND THEY ARE, AND ARE FRUITFUL IN ENDURANCE

CONCLUSION

Luke 8:4-15 — “Out Went the Sowing One to Sow the Seed of Him”

Grace, mercy, and peace to you all from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Today is Sexagesima and the appointed reading of the Gospel is Luke 8:4-15:

And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable:

A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

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

INTRODUCTION

As we draw ever more near to Lententide, the appointed readings direct us to that for which the Epiphany occurred. The Epiphany is the manifestation of the Word of God to the world. The Word was manifested for the salvation of the world by means of the suffering and death of Jesus. Throughout His ministry the Lord Jesus taught this. Today’s texts and especially the parable in today’s Gospel reading direct us to this manifestation of the work of the Word of God in the world.

I. OUT WENT THE SOWING ONE TO SOW THE SEED OF HIM

And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable:

A sower went out to sow his seed:

Luke informs us that a very large congregation had gathered unto Jesus. They had come to Him out of every city. This was common during the ministry of our Lord. He journeyed throughout the regions of Judah and Israel preaching the Gospel and performing miraculous signs in attestation to the Gospel. Wherever He went, people heard about His presence and congregated to wherever it was that they heard that He was present.

On such an occasion the Lord Jesus spoke to the congregation according to the parable recorded in our text. Jesus spoke to them a parable with deliberate intention. He later explained this intention to His disciples saying, **“Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.”**

What does this mean? The parable actually explains what this means. For those who have ears to hear the meaning is clear. For those who do not have ears to hear, the words are interpreted according to whatever the people choose for themselves. This is the warning embedded in the telling of parables. As St. Peter warns regarding the true and correct hearing of the Scriptures, **“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.”** (2 Peter 1:20)

Therefore, the Lord Jesus often spoke using parables, so that those who wanted to interpret according to their own opinions could do so and those who wanted to hear the true interpretation would ask of the LORD and hear Him.

The Lord Jesus begins the parable saying: **“Out went the sowing one of the to sow the seed of him.”**

Out went the Sowing One. Here is the primary point of the parable. Do we have to guess who this Sowing One is? For what purpose did the Sowing One go out? His purpose is clear: Of the to sow the seed of him.

Notice that this going out is past tense. Nevertheless, the One who has gone out is called the Sowing One. He has gone out to sow His Seed and is still out Sowing His Seed. He never stops. He has gone out with the intention of Sowing His Seed until the end of this age.

Such is the LORD God. From the time of creation until the end of this evil age the LORD is sowing His Seed. This is the picture that the Lord Jesus paints with the words of this parable. This is the understanding of God that is set before us to hear and to envision for ourselves. The LORD God has established that He shall continue among us in the world until the end of this evil age and He shall continue sowing His Seed until the time of this age runs out. He scatters His Seed far and wide. He does not limit it in any way. He generously, even carelessly, scatters His Seed to the wind to be carried to every corner of the earth. He scatters it and lets it fall on the roadway to be trampled. He scatters it to fall on the rock where it springs up and withers. He spreads it to fall among the thorns where it is choked to death. He scatters it so that no place will be without the seed, so that in every place the seed will be present to produce the good fruit of salvation. Yes, there is good ground where the seed also falls and grows and produces even a hundredfold.

II. IS NOW THIS THE PARABLE: THE SEED IS THE WORD OF GOD

Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

With these words Jesus begins to explain the parable. One sentence tells it all, but the Lord graciously expands the explanation for us. **“The Seed is the Word of God.”**

Do we have ears to hear what this means? **“The Seed is the Word of God.”**

This seems as though it should be simple and easy to grasp. Yet John, the last of the disciples, found it necessary to explain this in his Gospel account.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. (John 1:1-14)

“The Seed is the Word of God.” This carries us back to the beginning. This Word of God is not an abstract concept. This Word of God is real. This Word of God made the cosmos and all that is in it. This Word of God is God Himself, who made Himself to be flesh so as to live among us and provide for us all that we need for life, for He Himself is the Life and Light of the World.

“The Seed is the Word of God.” In the beginning God made Man in the image of God. He gave the command to be fruitful and multiply and to replenish the earth. Man, whom God created in the image of God was to fill the earth with the image of God. And what is the image of God, but Jesus? From the beginning, God was spreading His Seed, the Word, throughout the good earth. He created the earth for Man and from the earth He created Man in the image of God.

But Man broke the mold. Man broke the image of God. But God went forth unto Man and spread the Word concerning the Seed in connection with the curse of the deceiver.

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. (Genesis 3:15-16)

Jesus explains, saying, **“The Seed is the Word of God.”**

This is the promise given from the beginning. This is the promise that Jesus fulfilled in His own body. The Seed is the Word of God. The Seed is Jesus. Jesus is the Word of God in the flesh. He came in flesh and blood and He continues to be given in flesh and blood wherever the Word is received by those who have ears to hear.

III. IN THE GOOD GROUND THEY ARE, AND ARE FRUITFUL IN ENDURANCE

We live in a world of sin, death, and corruption. All around us we see the effects of sin in the world. The current age is an age of darkness. The Light shines but as in a dark place.

Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

Ever since Adam disobeyed, the Seed has been sown. Yet the LORD declared that for Adam's sake the ground is cursed. The world is not good anymore. God cursed the ground for Adam's sake. Thus, the Word is sown far and wide, but it falls by the way side and on the rock and among the thorns. Yet the LORD continues to sow His Seed generously. In this day and age the Word is sown more than in any other age. With the modern age of radio and television and the Internet, the Word is spread in every part of the world and it is sown twenty-four hours a day every single day. Moreover, the Scriptures, the written record of the Word, is available in so many translations that they cannot be counted.

And in this modern age the Word falls by the wayside more and more. The Word is truly trampled underfoot by the masses of mankind. The Word is mocked. The Word is misused. The Word is poured out into the streets and the devil gobbles it up and laughs with scorn. The devil gets fat from the Word, raising up synagogues of Satan in every place, where the preachers of various religions and sects and the pseudo-sciences get rich and build up their names and reputations.

But the Word also falls on the rock, where it springs up for a time amongst those who receive it with joy. They talk about how amazing God is. They build churches with big parking lots and contemporary worship. They even provide multiple forms of worship, often including the traditions of the liturgical heritage as one form of pomp alongside more obviously worldly grandeur. These churches grow and flourish for a time. The people come and rejoice in the friendliness of their churches and in the excitement of their praise and worship. For a time many

good works are done by the members as well. But the rock has no place for the Seed to take root. Those who rejoice must draw on their inner strength to produce the excitement of their spirituality, and in a while their energy is depleted. The Seed grew quickly but begins to wither. The great expectations soon become seen as transparent film that blows away in the winds of life.

Similarly the Word is received by those who are surrounded by thorns. At first the power of the Word gives life to their lives. They rejoice in the freedom of the Gospel, but they never really grow up past the cares and concerns of the world. The economy begins to falter and their retirement funds dwindle. Inflation eats away at their incomes. Their hopes and dreams fail them. They feel defeated and become depressed. They begin to doubt that they can be happy again. They turn to outside sources for help. The Gospel just isn't quite enough. They turn to doctors and psychologists and social workers. They go to court to try to recover their losses. They buy lottery tickets. They receive prescriptions from the doctors. They drown their concerns with alcohol.

In the end, what good is the Word? For those who hold fast unto the end, the Word is the means by which they endure. The Word does fall into good ground. The good ground is rare, but it does exist and the Word does land upon it and enter into it. In this good ground the Seed takes root deeply and grows and produces a hundredfold.

So where is this good ground? It is the ground that has been preserved from the beginning. It is the ground that has been kept free of the curse. This is ground that has been reestablished from beyond this world. It is the Seed that was preserved in Woman and born into the world by Mary. It is the body of Christ. It was kept safe as the Seed of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, and of David. In the fullness of time it was raised up and then was crucified and buried and raised again on the third day.

For those who are gathered into the body of Christ, where the Word and the Sacraments are administered purely, the Seed grows and produces fruit. Here the rock is down deep and the good soil of the body and blood of Jesus keep the Seed alive and growing strong. In this good soil the hearts are soft and the roots of the Seed penetrate deeply so that it cannot be uprooted. When the turbulent winds blow the roots hold fast. When the heat of difficult times beats down the roots bring forth from the abundant waters of life and the temptations of life are washed away and the robe of righteousness covers and protects the tender flesh of the Seed. When the cares of life grow up around them they look to the torn and broken body of Jesus and see their cares all carried away and buried forever and they cast all their anxieties upon the Lord Jesus and see them all disappear. Then they feast upon the body and blood of the Lord and rise up in the newness of the life of forgiveness restored to them. Yes, they keep the Word, that is, they continue in the Church's daily catechesis, being built up together and holding fast to the Word by which they live. And their lives reflect the produce of the Seed. All the works of Jesus show forth in their lives. His faith is made to be their faith. His love works love in them. His forgiveness fills them and overflows to those who do wrong to them. His steadfastness holds them fast so that even as He endured all things for them they continue in Him and endure unto their own end time on this earth. Truly they bear the fruit of Christ, the Seed, in their own bodies and the works that He works are imputed to them as their own. Patiently they wait and endure, even with rejoicing, as the Seed grows and produces fruit in them.

CONCLUSION

He who has ears to hear, let him hear. **“Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.”** Moreover, out went the Sowing One to sow the Seed of Him. From the beginning, God has not stopped sowing His Seed for us. His Seed is being sown everywhere and at all times. Furthermore, the good ground has been established for us. God has gathered us into the good ground, the body of Jesus. Among us His Seed is growing and producing the fruit by which we have life. We do not have to prepare the ground. God has done this for us. Therefore we rejoice together. We feast upon the blessings that the Seed produces among us. We thrive in the life that He gives. By the power of His life we are empowered to endure all things, even unto the end. Truly He has blessed us that we are able to hear these things. God grant that we continue in these things, bearing in our bodies the fruit that He produces among us, enduring in the strength and joy that He gives. In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus forever. Amen.