



Daily Reflections

July 16, 2017

Scripture

Matthew 13: 1-23

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 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 it 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 thirtyfold.

Whoever has ears ought to hear."

The 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 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, who indeed bears fruit and yields a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold."

Our Scripture Reflection

Using this most informative parable, Jesus taught the crowd about the various responses people made to God's Word: the path, rocky ground,

thorns, all represent the human refusal to embrace and live the Word. But, thanks to a humble and open heart, some seed fell on good soil and produced an abundant harvest.

Food for your Journey

A farmer, ragged and barefooted, was standing on the steps of his raggedy shack. A stranger stopped for a drink of water and he asked: "How is your cotton coming along?"

Farmer: "Ain't got any."

Stranger: "Did you plant any?"

Farmer: "Nope, afraid of boll weevils."

Stranger: "Well, how is your corn?"

Farmer: "Didn't plant any, afraid there would be no rain."

Stranger: "Well, how are your potatoes?"

Farmer: "Ain't got any, scared of the potato bugs."

Stranger: "Really, what did you plant?"

Farmer: "Nothing, I just played it safe."

So you got to ask: "How safe is it to not have any crops at all?"

Professor Deborah Kapp marvels that people choose to farm -- it's hard work, seven days a week, and lots of farmers struggle to survive. "Nevertheless, year after year, people plant, grow and harvest crops," she writes in *Feasting on the Gospels: Matthew, Volume 1*. "Discipleship is a wonderful adventure that invites us to share God's word as a farmer plants her crops: with a clear vision of the world's fickleness, a willingness to fail, hope, resilience, and the deep trust that by God's grace at least some of our work will bear fruit."

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, May I always be open to Your Word so that I can put it into practice each day. In doing so, may I give You honor, glory and praise. Amen.