

Sunday Message

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year A • 12 July 2026 • Psalter Week 3

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

MATTHEW 13:1-23 (MATTHEW 13:1-9 SHORTER FORM)



In this passage, Jesus tells the Parable of the Sower, describing how the message of the kingdom of heaven is received differently by different people. The sower scatters seed widely, illustrating God's generous offer of the Gospel. The focus is not on the sower, but on the soil – the hearts of those who hear the word.

The parable identifies four types of soil: the path, where the seed is quickly snatched away; rocky ground, where the word springs up but withers without deep roots; among thorns, where cares and desires choke growth; and rich soil, where the seed bears abundant fruit. Each soil represents a condition of the human heart, reminding us that the reception of God's word is affected by openness, perseverance, and priorities.

Jesus explains that the "seed" is the word of the kingdom, and the varying results show both the promise and the challenge of discipleship. Some hear but do not retain; others accept superficially; others are distracted by worldly concerns. Yet, when we are prepared to listen, the word produces abundant growth, revealing God's patience and the transformative power of his message.

The parable encourages self-reflection: are our hearts like rich soil, ready to receive, nurture, and bear fruit from the word of God? ■

REFLECT

Jesus reminds us today that hearing the word of God is only the beginning. The seed falls widely, generously, but the fruit it bears depends on the condition of the soil – the openness of our hearts. Some hearts are like the path: the word is quickly lost, easily distracted. Some are like rocky ground: initial enthusiasm fades without deep roots. Others are choked by the worries and desires of life, leaving little room for growth.

Yet the parable also shows hope. Where hearts are receptive, the seed produces abundant fruit – thirty, sixty, even a hundredfold. God's word is powerful, patient, and persistent. Discipleship asks us to cultivate our hearts: to listen, reflect, and nurture faith, allowing it to take root deeply.

This Gospel encourages honest self-examination. How do we respond when God speaks to us? Are we attentive and committed, or do we let life's distractions prevent growth? The promise is clear: when we open ourselves fully to God, his word transforms us, shaping our thoughts, actions, and relationships. Like rich soil, our hearts can bear fruit that endures, showing the power of God's kingdom in everyday life. ■

DO

This week, take a moment each day to reflect quietly on God's word, asking how it can take root in your life.



LEARN

God's word is powerful and fruitful, but it requires openness, attentiveness, and care in our hearts to bear the fruit of discipleship.



SAY

"Lord, make me a good and faithful servant of Your Word."

St Francis de Sales

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

*As for me, in justice I shall behold your face;
I shall be filled with the vision of your glory.*

COLLECT

O God, who show the light of your truth
to those who go astray,
so that they may return to the right path,
give all who for the faith they profess
are accounted Christians
the grace to reject whatever is contrary to the name of Christ
and to strive after all that does it honour.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING Isaiah 55:10-11

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

Thus says the Lord:

'For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven
and do not return there but water the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.'

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 65(64):10a-d. 10e-11. 12-13. 14 R. Luke 8:8

R: Some seed fell into good soil and yielded its fruit.

1. You visit the earth, give it water;
you fill it with riches.
God's ever-flowing river brims over
to prepare the grain. **R.**
2. And thus you prepare it:
you drench its furrows;
you level it, soften it with showers;
you bless its growth. **R.**
3. You crown the year with your bounty.
Abundance flows in your pathways;
in pastures of the desert it flows.
The hills are girded with joy. **R.**
4. The meadows clothed with flocks.
The valleys are decked with wheat.
They shout for joy; yes, they sing! **R.**

SECOND READING Romans 8:18-23

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans.

Brothers and sisters: I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption, and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL

R: Alleluia, alleluia.

The seed is the word of God, Christ the sower;
all who find him will live for ever.

R: Alleluia.

GOSPEL Matthew 13:1-23

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

(for shorter form read between > <)

> At that time: Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake. And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: 'A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears, let him hear.' <

Then the disciples came and said to him, 'Why do you speak to them in parables?' And he answered them, 'To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: "You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive." For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.'

'Hear then the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Look upon the offerings of the Church, O Lord,
as she makes her prayer to you,
and grant that, when consumed by those who believe,
they may bring ever greater holiness.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

*The sparrow finds a home,
and the swallow a nest for her young:
by your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.
Blessed are they who dwell in your house,
for ever singing your praise.*

Or

*Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood
remains in me and I in him, says the Lord.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having consumed these gifts, we pray, O Lord,
that, by our participation in this mystery,
its saving effects upon us may grow.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.