

The Efficacy of God's Word

Promise: God's Word has the power to accomplish what it intends

Pastor Timothy A. Duesenberg

Isaiah 55:10-13; Psa 65; Rom 8:12-17; Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

(7th Su after Pent (Pr 10), 7/16/23)

"Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears, let him hear."— v 8-9

Lead In – Did you catch the words in our Isaiah text? "(My word) 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." God's Word is likened onto a seed in the parable our Lord Jesus tells in our Gospel Lesson. And the abundant harvest represents people who come to faith in Christ through His Word. Jesus promised in Matthew 9:37, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few." And yet in our present Gospel text Jesus explains why not all seeds sown will produce a harvest. It has nothing to do with defective seed!...

I. Of All the Accolades to Be Given to God's Word...

- A. We usually mention *authority, inerrancy, infallibility*...
- B. More also to be made of *power, efficacy, performative*

II. Lack of Fruitfulness Attributed to Three Soil Types

- A. Some seeds fall on the beaten path (hardened hearts)
- B. Some seeds fall on the rocky ground (shallowness)...
- C. Some seeds fall among thorns (distraction, priority) ...

III. So What's Up With the Good Soil?

- A. Hearing is a gift, but do we listen attentively?
- B. Meditation, mulling over, being in conversation...
- C. No substitution for obediently putting Word into play...

Final Word – I believe one would have to be tone deaf not to hear the terrifying warning in this parable. With hardened hearts it is possible that Satan might steal away the Gospel from our lives. With shallowness of faith it is possible to wither away in the face of tribulation. With the misplaced priorities with lesser things it is possible to have the spiritual life choked out of us. The warning is given that none of these happen to us. And we are not left to our own devices. Rather, are to treasure, hold onto, listen to, and heed our Lord's voice in His Word. Then indeed it will bear much fruit in our lives.

Is 55:10-11 "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." (He 4:12)

Mt 13:19 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.

Mt 13:20-21 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.

Matthew 13:1-9 ESV

The Parable of the Sower

¹ That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. ² And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. ³ And he told them many things in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. ⁴ And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. ⁵ 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, ⁶ but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. ⁷ Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. ⁸ Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹ He who has ears, let him hear."

Mt 13:22 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.

Mt 13:23 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.

1Pe 1:23 You have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.

He 5:11-12 About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food.

Ps 1:2 [The blessed man's] delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

Ja 1:22 Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

Heavenly Father, make our hearts be good soil open to the seed of Your Word. Break away the stones of hardness, deepen our shallowness, and remove the thorns of distraction that choke away the new life. Plant Your Word deep within our hearts. Lord God, may the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts... Amen.