

## HARVEST FESTIVAL

LUKE 8,4-15.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for the sermon is the Gospel we heard before from LUKE 8,4-15.

**4 When a large crowd was gathering and the people were coming to Jesus from every city, He spoke by means of a parable: 5 “A sower went out to sow his seed. As he was sowing, some seed fell along the path. It was trampled on and the birds of the air ate it up. 6 Some fell on rock. When it came up, it withered because it had no moisture. 7 Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it. 8 However, other seed fell on good soil, and it came up and yielded a crop a hundred times as much.”**

**When He said this, He called out, “Let the one who has ears to hear listen!”**

**9 His disciples asked Him what this parable meant. 10 He answered, “To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest, in parables, that ‘Although they see they may not see, and although they hear they may not understand.’**

**11 “The parable is this: The seed is the Word of God. 12 Those people along the path are those who hear. Then the Devil comes and takes the Word out of their hearts that they may not become believers and be saved. 13 The people on the rock are those who receive the Word with joy when they hear it, and yet these have no root. They believe for a while, and in time of temptation they fall away. 14 The seeds that fell among thorns are those who have heard, and yet, as they go along, they are choked by worries, riches, and pleasures of life, and do not produce a mature crop. 15 However, the seeds on the good soil are the ones who, with a good and honest heart, have heard the Word, retain it, and produce a crop with patience.**

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us in your truth. Your Word is truth. **Amen**

Dear Friends in Christ,  
Peace be with you.

In the book of Isaiah, chapter 55, verses 10-11, we have this promise of the Lord: **as the rain and the snow come down from the sky and do not go back there without watering the earth and causing it to bring forth and to sprout, so that it gives seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so My Word will be, which goes out of My mouth. It will not return to Me without results, but it will accomplish what I desire and be successful in what I have sent it to do.”**

The Holy Spirit is active in preaching the Word of God, "the Law and the Gospel." It has the power to touch the heart of each of us, and produce repentance and faith in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. The preaching of the Word is like planting, rain and harvest food. So why not produce the same crop in each case?

In our Gospel for today, our Lord tells a parable of the sower. **" A sower went out to sow his seed..."** It's the work of the sower to sow the seed everywhere, without discrimination, as commanded by his master. That is to say, is the work of the preacher to preach the Word everywhere. Jesus told the apostles **"You will be my witnesses, while in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."** [Acts 1:8.]

And the Word always has the power of the Holy Spirit to touch hearts. But the power of the Spirit is not like the power of the sword or firearms or the power of the Force from Star wars! Not the power of violence, but the power to enlighten, to show man his sins, to awaken the life of faith, to show God's love. But man always has the power to reject the Word of God.

Therefore, **"some seed fell along the path. It was trampled on and the birds of the air ate it up."** This part means **the Devil comes and takes the Word out of their hearts that they may not become believers and be saved.** They reject God's mercy and they won't repent their sins. The Spirit, active in the Word, has the knowledge of their sins and the grace of God, but they reject it, they will be condemned.

At the other extreme, **"other seed fell on good ground, sprang up and bore fruit a hundredfold."** This is the result that pleases the Lord, because if there are good works as the fruit of faith, it is a blessing for all. Where there is good testimony of God's love in the lives of believers, it is easy for others to listen to the Word, believe and be saved as well. The Lord willing, it will be that way among us.

However, between the rejection of the Word and growing in good soil, there are two other cases. First,

**"Some fell on rock. When it came up, it withered because it had no moisture."** Our Lord explains this way: **"The people on the rock are those who receive the Word with joy when they hear it, and yet these have no root. They believe for a while, and in time of temptation they fall away."** The word is water and food for the harvest as well. Those who respond to the preaching, repent and are baptized, but not continue to listen to preaching and to receive the body and blood of Jesus Christ in the sacrament are not ready for the times of trial in this life.

**"Look! The days are coming," declares the Lord GOD, "when I shall send a famine on the land, not hunger for food or thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the Words of the LORD. People will wander from sea to sea and run back and forth from the north to the east, searching for the Word of the LORD, but they will not find it."** [Amos 8:11,12] A scarcity of the Word of God is more terrible than a famine of food and water. If you don't take the time to listen, reflect and learn from the Word of God when you have the opportunity to confess our sins, and receive absolution and the sacrament to the power of faith in the time of trial they may not have the comfort of the Gospel and perhaps may lose the hope of eternal life in Christ. The promises of God in baptism and Holy Communion are sure. But those who don't remain faithful to repentance and life in Christ, can be led astray and may not be able to return. And on the day of trouble, **"People will wander from sea to sea and run back and forth from the north to the east, searching for the Word of the LORD, but they will not find it."** [Amos 8:12.]

In the last case, **"Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it"** The Lord said: **"The seeds that fell among thorns are those who have heard, and yet, as they go along, they are choked by worries, riches, and pleasures of life, and do not produce a mature crop."**

For a good harvest, a good seedbed is necessary. The harvest of the Word needs water and food of the Word and the sacraments. But we also need to clean the weeds from the seedbed of our hearts. That's to say, what are our priorities in life? To love God and neighbour in humility and gratitude for the mercy God has shown us.

Be careful with the desires and anxieties of this life. Our heavenly Father knows all our needs, and we rely on them for all we need. Every day is a blessing from God, our homes, food, our families, everything good in our lives. Of course, the biggest blessing is the gift of faith and hope of eternal life in Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.  
**C Amen.**

**3rd Hymn: 900,**

**Prayer of the Church 16th Sunday after Pentecost Mission Sunday 2018.**

P Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.  
*Brief silence*

P We thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have revealed to us Your salvation in Your Son, Jesus Christ, crucified for our sins and raised for our justification and is seated at Your right hand. We pray that You would preserve our faith as that of little children, guarding us against perverting Your saving Gospel with the notions and wisdom of man, and that we might have the glad confidence of forgiveness and eternal life, accompanied by Your Holy Spirit to not be timid in our mission, and allowing us to boldly proclaim Your Gospel to our friends and neighbours, solely for the sake of Christ Jesus our Lord..... Lord, in Your mercy,

**C hear our prayer.**

P We thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You gave Your Son to speak salvation and peace to the nations. We commend to You our nation and the nations of the world. Grant to leaders wisdom, justice and integrity, that they may serve in their offices for the good of those You have entrusted to their care; and grant to citizens a cheerful heart to honour authority and serve those around them, and preserve us by Your grace.... Lord, in Your mercy,

**C hear our prayer.**

P We thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for the many undeserved freedoms that You have poured out upon us, both the freedom from sin and the liberties we enjoy within our country. We pray that we may not abuse those freedoms as license to satisfy the sin that dwells within us, but rather that we may rejoice to act in service to You and to our neighbour..... Lord, in Your mercy,

**C hear our prayer.**

P We thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Your Son has already borne all of our sins and infirmities to the cross. We commend to You all who are especially weary and heavy laden by sickness and affliction [ / ]. Grant to them healing and deliverance according to Your will, and sustain their faith in the meantime so that they may find rest for their souls in You..... Lord, in Your mercy,

**C hear our prayer.**

P We thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that, Your Son provided for the needs of the people by feeding thousands with just a few loaves of bread. We thank You for the bountiful Harvests that You provide for our needs today. Our Nation is so blessed by different regions and climates but is dry, stock and crops are failing. Framers and their families are not doing very well. Please send rain and sun in the right measure, and just the right time so that crops might abound and every hungry mouth be fed not just here but also around the world. ....Lord, in Your mercy,

**C hear our prayer.**

P We thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Christ our King still comes to us righteous and having salvation in the fellowship of this altar, we come and taste Your goodness as You give us Your body and blood to eat and drink under simple bread and wine. Let us not take this sacred meal for granted, strengthen our faith in the wondrous things You've done for our salvation, and increase in us Christian charity towards our neighbours....Lord, in Your mercy,

**C hear our prayer.**

P We thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for all the saints who have gone before us, and whom You have delivered from this body of death through Jesus Christ our Lord. We pray that You would preserve us in the faith until we join them in eternal rest and peace with You..... Lord, in Your mercy,

**C hear our prayer.**

P Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

**4th Hymn: 902,**