

“Good soil”-July 12, 2020-Matthew 13-Parable of the Sower and the Seed-  
Confirmation 2020

There is a favorite in my house. At least for my 3 year old Ben. He loves the story of the three little pigs. We all know the story. One little pig builds his house out of straw. The second little pig builds his house out of the sticks and the third one builds his house out of bricks. Anybody reading would quickly figure out the last pig was the wise one with a wolf around.

However, what we don't know in the story is why did the third pig have the good sense to build his house out of bricks, while his two brothers did not? We are left not knowing, but we do know how it ends. The one who made sure his house was solid saved himself and his family.

It is a story that in some ways relates to our Gospel today and this confirmation weekend. I know sometimes one of the things we can struggle with as Christians is why some seem to stay active in their Christian faith beyond confirmation and their youth, while others do not.

I am sure probably all of you have someone in your family who went to church as a child, were confirmed like these four, but now no longer go. When I was back home this past weekend, I was looking at the picture of my confirmation class. In talking to my parents, we were not aware of any of them who regularly attend my home church and I am not sure if any of them regularly attend somewhere else.

Sadly, probably some of you getting confirmed today will go that route, even though I hope and pray that you do not. You will get busy with life, distracted by the world, and church may not be a large priority for you, and the question could be asked why.

Well, Jesus gives us some explanation today in His word. An explanation that is important for all of us to understand because it gives us all both warning and encouragement.

It is Jesus' parable of the Sower and the Seed. I brought some props today to illustrate this parable again. Hard floor mat. ...Dirt on cement block. ...Some among the weeds-bring from home....Fell on good soil.

Now how does this parable relate to us? Well, it is Jesus' way of explaining why not everyone who hears his word comes to faith in Him or stays in the faith in Him. The first seed represents, as Jesus explains, those who hear the word of the

Kingdom, the Word about Him, but do not come to believe because Satan snatches it away from them before it penetrates the heart. Some people can hear the word but not believe because Satan has so got them in his clutches that he will do everything possible for the seed of Christ's word to never take root in them.

You have probably met people like this. They won't even consider the Gospel message about Jesus because Satan has convinced them they absolutely don't need it in their lives. He has convinced them maybe they have too much to lose in the way of popularity or life-style to consider Christ and His Word for their life. However, what they don't know it is that their lives are like that house built out of straw in the little pig story. It is doomed to perish without that word of the Gospel implanted in their lives which the Spirit uses to bring us to faith. Jesus says in John 3:36, **"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him."** You do not want to be that seed on the last day.

But what about the second seed. As Jesus explains, the second seed represents those who first hear the word of the Kingdom, the word about Christ, and immediately receive it with joy, but after a little while, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away.

Sadly, it is the temptation Satan will place before you four sitting here today. He places it before all who have once heard Christ's word and received it. It is to abandon the Word of Christ we were taught, especially when times get tough. He would love to convince us that the troubles we face in life mean Jesus really doesn't care about us or love us, that we shouldn't face hard times as Christians and if we do, it shows us we can't trust Christ's word.

However, Jesus never promises us a trouble, tribulation free life. What he does promise is help and strength and consolation as we face the troubles and tribulations of life if we face them with faith and confidence in His presence and grace.

However, I guarantee you, you will all face troubles in your life that may tempt you to question your faith and Christ's goodness and help, and tempt you to abandon your course of faith in Christ. Satan would love to use this time we are all going through now to do this in our lives, however Christ would continually call us back to his Word and promises in this and every time of temptation and trust they are true for our lives, even when things seem pretty dark. He wants us to look beyond our troubles to Him, realizing the ultimate blessing of following Him by

faith isn't having a life free from troubles in this life, but having the promise of sins forgiven and the future of everlasting life with Him through that faith and forgiveness.

What we don't want to be is that seed that never develops a root, and a good root system comes by continuing to go to God's Word in both the good times and the bad and trusting in its promises even when the troubles and tribulations of this life begin to pull us away from them or to question them. Cling to them as your anchor in the storm and your house of faith will endure by the Spirit's work through them. It is your solid defense against that wily wolf Satan who is always going to take down your house of faith.

The third set of seed also provides a warning. It represents those who hear the Word of Christ, but then let "the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word", choking out its fruitfulness in your life.

How many begin to neglect the Word of Christ in their life because their work gets in the way? How many begin to neglect the Word of Christ because the cares of this world, like the pursuit of money, or other worldly passions begin to choke out their faith life?

I can't tell you how many times I have heard as a pastor people's excuses for why they can't seem to make it to church to hear God's Word because they need to earn more money or are just too busy, even though the purpose of God setting aside the Sabbath day as holy was to eliminate our excuses. Work and other activities weren't supposed to be an excuse. If they are, we are breaking the 3<sup>rd</sup> commandment.

No, Christ's desire for you who are getting confirmed and all of you is that His seed might take root in you in such a way that you don't just know His Word, but that His Word produces a harvest of righteousness in you. A harvest of a hunger for His Word and to grow in it. A harvest of a thirst for being in His house and worshipping Him. A harvest of wanting to make sure others know what you have come to believe that through Christ we have been provided the way to everlasting life through the forgiveness for our sins offered through Him.

Because while Jesus is telling us in this parable why some don't believe or fall away, His desire would be for His Word to take root in all of us in such a way that we are all that seed that falls on good soil and produces a crop.

A crop in some of you maybe just being a church member and using your gifts and talents to serve Christ here. In others of you, perhaps he is calling you to

more. To get involved in the community, evangelizing in your own way to your family and friends. Perhaps some of you may have a future in ministry. I don't know what Christ has planned for you four, but I know He has a plan for your life and the way He communicates His plans for you is through his Word. Let it guide you and He will not steer you wrong.

I have seen it in my own life. For as God's word says, "The word of the Lord is a lamp unto our feet and a light for our path." It is a solid rock, a house of bricks, when the winds of trouble blow, and with it as our anchor, our house will not fall. Amen.