

Sexagesima

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Preacher: Fr. Paul Beutell

[0 : 00] And he said to you, it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God. What is the condition of your soul?

This is the underlying question Jesus is asking us in the parable of the sower and the seed. He is asking us to honestly assess the state of our soul and ask ourselves, what is the condition of its soil?

Jesus says there are four possible answers. The condition of our soul is either like wayside soil, rocky soil, thorny soil, or good soil.

Which type of soil does your soul have? Wayside souls are unprepared. Their surface is so hard that when the seed of the word is sown, either by scripture or in the sacraments, it doesn't penetrate at all.

The word lays on the surface to be snatched away by Satan and sin, or is trampled underfoot by the world and the flesh and rendered unusable.

[1 : 28] A wayside soul is unable to produce any fruit of good works, and therefore is useless to the kingdom of God. Rocky souls lack depth, and therefore are dry.

The word is able to take root and spring up for a time, but the lack of depth causes it to dry up when tried by the slightest amount of heat from tribulation or persecution.

Rocky souls produce the good works of wood, hay, and straw, which if they last through the tribulations of the world, will be burned by the fires of the particular judgment.

That St. Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 3, verses 12-15. Thorny souls are worldly.

Because they are, the thorny soul is most likely to be self-deceived about the condition of its soil. They can and do produce genuine good works, works that are valuable to the kingdom.

[2 : 41] Therefore, they think the soil of their soul is good, but it's not. It's certainly unreliable and maybe counterfeit.

For when it comes to choosing between what the word of God says and what the world says, you know what is popular or what appeases non-Christian family, friends, co-workers, or what is comfortable for oneself.

It chooses the broad way that leads to eternal death. In mixing the seed of the word with the thorns of the world, the soul with thorny soil is ultimately unfruitful.

They are like the Ephesian Christians. Jesus describes the St. John in Revelation 2, verses 2-7. Jesus says to those with souls with thorny soil, I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil.

You have persevered and have patience, and have labored for my name's sake, and have not become weary. Nevertheless, I have this against you.

[4 : 02] Thorny souls leave off their love for Christ for the things of the world, for its goals, for its desires, even for its anxieties and its fears.

As with the Ephesian Christians, they must repent and do the first works, for they have lost their first love. The final type of soul Jesus describes in the parable has good soil.

The soul with good soil is fruit-producing. In St. Matthew's version of this same parable, Jesus says, But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces some 100, some 60, some 30.

The soul with good soil is like the servant with the five talents, or the servant with the three talents, that Jesus speaks of in St. Matthew chapter 25. They take the seed of the word they receive from Scripture and the sacraments, and they put it to use.

They risk it even, knowing this is the very thing the Lord requires of them. When the heat of tribulation is on, they are able to withstand.

[5 : 35] When the world comes at them with its cares, its concerns, and its selfish pursuits, they don't get choked out. They keep their first love.

Some with this soil produce 30-fold, and some 60, but others produce 100-fold. But no matter the yield at the judgment, the Lord will say to them, Well done, good and faithful servant.

Brethren, there is no reason for our soul to have anything but good soil. Why? Because of the sacrament of holy baptism.

Ezekiel chapter 36, verses 25-30, describes what God does to the soil of our soul in this sacrament. He states, I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean. I will cleanse you from all your filthiness, and from all your idols.

[6 : 45] I will give you a new heart, and put a new spirit within you. I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh, and give you a heart of flesh.

I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you will keep my judgments and do them. I will deliver you from all your uncleanness.

And I will multiply the fruit of your trees, and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine. among the nations.

By the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit, given to us in baptism, the soil of our soul is made good, and capable of producing abundant fruits, for the kingdom of God.

But do we keep it good? It is up to us to, by grace, strive to do so.

[7 : 51] Or do we allow the surface to become hardened, and incapable of receiving the word? Do we allow stones to collect, or thorns to grow?

If we have, then we need to receive the sacrament of penance, to have good soil restored. The grace of absolution given in the sacrament, restores the heart of flesh, given to us in holy baptism. And then the way we keep our soul from becoming hard, rocky, or thorny, is by being in the word, and in prayer daily, receiving the Eucharist at least weekly, and then working out the grace God works into our soul by these means.

The amount of fruit produced, that's up to God. Will it be 30? Will it be 60? Will it be 100-fold?

Ephesians 2, 10 states, all good works are prepared in advance for us to walk in.

We are to consciously seek for what God has prepared for us. Fearlessly embrace what God has prepared for us. And then faithfully live out what God has prepared for us.

[9 : 18] But we will never be able to do so if the condition of the soil of our soul is not good. The seed of the word will never penetrate.

It will never take root. It will never grow. This is why the underlying question Jesus asks us through the parable of the sower and the seed is this.

What is the condition of your soul? In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.