

Fifteen Sunday of Ordinary Time – 12th July 2020

The prophet Isaiah reminds us that whenever the Word of God flows into the world it always achieves its purpose, for the Lord says, '...the word that goes from my mouth does not return to me empty, without carrying out my will and succeeding in what it was sent to do.' So how does this knit in with the Gospel parable where so much of the seed of The Word of God is poured into the world and yet apparently, not fully achieving its purpose? Even Jesus Christ who is The Word was not fully received and accepted then or now! Did Jesus Christ The Word – fail in His mission and return to heaven without succeeding in what He was sent to do?

As we read, 'Jesus left the house and sat by the lakeside.' Jesus is in need of prayer and time alone with God the Father – Jesus time and time again removes Himself from people in order to be at-one in that perfect relationship we know as the Holy Trinity – he surrenders Himself to Love (with a capital L) – Love that is God, Love that is life giving and sustaining in times of need and temptation. And again as often happens people go and look for Jesus, and this time He tells them a parable – He conveys a Truth to them about their relationship or relationships with God.

As with all sowers of seed when they throw the seed onto the ground, so too with Jesus the sower of the seed of The Word; they know that not all seed will fall on the good soil and yet in generosity and in hopefulness the sower allows this to happen. In the scattering of the seed – in transmitting The Word – as widely and freely as possible there is always the possibility that things may begin to happen and grow.

No person or possible bit of worldly terrain is left uninvited or untouched by the seed of the generous sower. This generosity of the sower is not a failing or a naivety, but a trust and a love that allows for something to happen, and then there is the possibility for true growth even in adversity. But, without this initial sharing and entry into the soil of life there would be no potential for growth and miracles to happen. The success criteria is not growth per se, the success criteria is that the whole of the field of the world and humanity is allowed to be touched by the Word of God.

As we see with the parable, the seed of the Word of God is not forced upon anything or anyone; it merely lands gently and invitingly onto the soil of the earth or onto the soil of our hearts. The Lord does not force; He certainly invites and entices, He will be persistent and persevere, for He is faithful and always ready to re-till the soil and feed the struggling sprouting seed – His watering comes from a never-ending spring of Love and hopefulness for us all.

As the seed of The Word of God is scattered upon our hearts today we need to be as generous in receiving The Word, as Jesus is in scattering it, for He knows that with in our lives we are struggling with the dryness and thinness of our lives at times, that we are struggling with the thorns and rocks of difficulty with in our own inner recesses of life – the hurts and wounds we have received and given – and in the relationships with our families, friends and the world around us. Jesus is also aware of the great richness of our lives and the overwhelming generosity of heart that we are capable of and do offer to one another most of the time. Jesus sees who we are as a whole, for as we are told, 'man looks at appearance, but God looks at the heart,' (1 Sam 16:7).

Jesus knows we will fail from time to time and yet in His great generosity of Himself we are told, 'where sin increases, Grace abounds all the more,' (Romans 5:20), Grace being nothing more or less than God's free Love. The Lord knows that He will land often on unproductive soil and yet He still throws Himself onto us so that His Healing, Forgiving and Nourishing Grace can transform our wounds, sins and hungering into a rich harvest of freedom from within ourselves and hence for those around us.

Let us receive The Lord into the whole of our lives – hiding nothing nor holding anything back from Him – and allowing Him to land wherever and even ever in our lives.

So how did Jesus The Word succeed in entering the world and returning to The Father in Heaven, for it is obvious that not all of humanity have received Him fully or at all? Jesus was not able to turn all people back to God in their

life and the living of the lives, so He did the one thing that only He as Man and God could do, He loved them back to oneness with God – Jesus The Word, the seed sent into the soil of humanity, sacrificed Himself on the Cross with arms outstretched holding the hand of humanity and the hand of God, and so ‘through His wounds brought healing into the world’ (1 Peter 2:24) – Jesus become the rich soil for us all – Jesus Himself ensures that through Him we are able to produce a harvest in our lives, more rich than we could imagine or hope for – for He is our Hope and our Healing. And there is no soil that is threatened by dryness, thinness, rocks or thorns that the Lord Jesus has not and cannot overcome - He is the rich soil of our lives.

We too like Jesus need to find a bit of time to sit by the lakeside of our lives and invite that richness of The Lord into our hearts and lives in prayer and allow Him to re-till the soil that we have neglected for so long and allow it to become the rich flower bed or rich crop of forgiveness and healing of self and others.