



## Lectionary Bible Study Our Savior Lutheran Church

### Lectionary 15 Readings

Isaiah 55:10-13, Psalm 65:1-13  
Romans 8:1-11, Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

[Click here](#) to join Pastor Mark for a Live Zoom conversation each Wednesday at 10am.

Meeting ID: 868 8793 0554

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Or dial in for audio only: 1-301-715-8592

### Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23 (NRSV)

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. <sup>2</sup>Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. <sup>3</sup>And he told them many things in parables, saying: “Listen! A sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup>And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. <sup>5</sup>Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. <sup>6</sup>But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. <sup>7</sup>Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. <sup>8</sup>Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. <sup>9</sup>Let anyone with ears listen!”

<sup>18</sup>“Hear then the parable of the sower. <sup>19</sup>When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. <sup>20</sup>As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; <sup>21</sup>yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. <sup>22</sup>As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. <sup>23</sup>But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

This passage has Jesus teaching in parables, and is the first of seven parables about the kingdom of God we find in Matthew’s gospel. We don’t often encounter parables in literature anymore, and we tend to think of a parable is a cute story with a moral, as if it is a fable. Parables use everyday life stories to convey spiritual meaning. However, in Jesus’ use of a parable there is always a “surprise ending.” This parable tells a story of agriculture – of a sower sowing seeds.

1. *Why would an agricultural themed story resonate with Jesus’ audience? Would that theme fit your context today, if you were to tell a story?*

Let's look closer at this parable, and the explanation Jesus gives to it in v 18-23.

**A sower went out to sow...**

2. *Who does the sower represent in the parable?*
3. *What is the seed that is sown? (see verse 19)*

**Some seeds fell on the path...birds came and ate them up...**

4. *What does the path represent and what is the consequence? (see verse 19)*

**Some seeds fell on rocky ground...sprang up quickly...were scorched/withered...**

5. *What does the rocky ground represent and what is the consequence? (see verse 20-21)*

**Some seeds fell among thorns...choked...**

6. *What do the thorns represent and what is the consequence? (see verse 22)*

**Some seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain**

7. *What does the rocky ground represent and what is the consequence? (see verse 23)*

**Some 100 fold, some 60, some 30...**

8. *What yield would a farmer expect? What is different about the yields God sows?*
9. *Why are there different harvests even when the soil is good?*
10. *What do these yields say about the sower? About the soil?*

**Let anyone with ears listen!** The Greek word for "listen" can also be translated as "obey."

11. *How is spiritual listening different from hearing?*
12. *How do you experience this parable? Have you seen the word of God choked, scorched, plentiful?*

This passage begins by telling us that Jesus is preaching to a large crowd. He used the natural amplification of the lake to project his message. Yet, verse 10 show us that the explanation of the parable is given to the disciples. Perhaps this means that God is not the only sower in this parable – so are the disciples (as are we!) We too have the word of God to sow.

Remember when we explained that Jesus' teachings always have a surprise ending? What is the surprise ending in this parable – a parable that seems so clear (Jesus even gives us the explanation!) I suggest that the surprise ending is that the sower – one whose job is to reap a harvest – sowed seeds in such unreliable soils – paths, rocky ground, and thorny soil. Isn't that so true of God - lavishly throwing love around? May we sow seeds of God's bountiful love with abandon!