

Preach You the Word

- ✠ The Sower's reckless love (vv.1-9)
- ✠ Our fruitful Harvest Lord (vv.18-23)

In the Name of Jesus, the **Sower of reckless love, Our fruitful Harvest Lord**, dear coworkers of Christ:

Who would want a job like this where three out of four projects, plantings, campaigns – whatever – three out of four fail! Jesus tells an earthly story with a heavenly meaning, a parable, in order to make spiritual truth plain and clear to His people. But Jesus also says (v.10-17) that He uses parable to hide the truth from calloused, unrepentant hearts. Just before He explains this Parable of the Sower to His disciples, Jesus says, ***“Blessed are your eyes because they see and your ears because they hear. ¹⁷ Amen I tell you: Many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you are seeing, but they did not see it. They longed to hear what you are hearing, but they did not hear it.”*** (Matthew 13:16f EHV)

Last week we heard the dear Holy Spirit **Define Christian: Finds Rest in God Alone**. This week **The Christian is Planted by the Word**. Here your spirit finds rest as you dearly desire God's peace for others, but three out of four efforts fail. Jesus commands His coworkers **Preach You the Word**.¹ Before saying *why*, **Our fruitful Harvest Lord** tells us *how*. **Preach You the Word**, proclaim it in...

✠ The Sower's reckless love (vv.1-9)

Our Lord and Master explains **reckless love**. Jesus certainly had no lack of skill as He went about preaching and teaching and sharing God's love in more miracles than anyone else ever performed. Sometimes Jesus introduced a difficult lesson by saying, ***“If you are willing to receive it...”*** (Matthew 11:14), or, ***“Not everyone can receive this...”*** (Matthew 19:11), then He taught about marriage as one man and one woman for life. No divorce except for adultery or desertion. **Reckless love** is not rash.

Jesus' genius shines even for non-gardeners as He uses earthly things to shed light on spiritual matters. With one son born and a daughter on the way, Cindy and I were really grateful to the faculty at my first assignment from Sem. They planted a garden for us in Prairie du Chien, WI. Taking care of it taught me valuable lessons about **The Sower's reckless love**. It's not about how hard you try.

Chopping weeds one hot, humid Saturday made me too sick for church on Sunday. Heat stroke. In the faculty lounge a kind colleague shared that “the ground is much softer, Mark, if you water it first.” Never had to do that in the sandy soil out West! But it sure works better in the Midwest!

My first planting of corn I was sure failed. So the second planting with all the advice I was getting meant carefully setting the seeds, carrying lots of water in that hot, dry summer. Harvest time was awesome on the “failed” first crop – straight, succulent kernels on more ears of corn than I could count. But the hard fought second planting? Not one ear. All that work for nothing. Only God can make it grow!

“You soften it with showers and bless its crops.” (Psalm 65:10 NIV) Like that sea of squash Cindy planted, that huge feast of more than we could eat or give away. “Feast or famine”? – not your concern, not your control. **Preach You the Word** like a city worker broadcasting seed by hand in **reckless love**.

Is proclaiming God's Word really three fourths failure? Seems like it sometimes, but note Martin Franzmann's skillful punctuation on his famous hymn. With some *snatched ...scorched...matted flat, the sower sows; his heart cries out, “Oh, what of that, and what of that?”* (Anguished, “Oh...?”) Stanza 5:

¹ “Preach You the Word,” by Martin H. Franzmann, 1907-1976. (CWH 895)

...one-fourth of scattered plenteousness waves ripe on hill and flat, and bears a harvest, hundredfold: "Ah, what of that, Lord, what of that!" (Triumphant, "Ah...!") We rejoice in the 100x miracle of...

✠ Our fruitful Harvest Lord (vv.18-23)

"So listen carefully to the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the Evil One comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the seed that was sown along the path." Before it's too late, the *word of the kingdom* calls us to repentance as Christ rules in your heart by that Word. A man confessed to his pastor in the hospital he'd missed thirty years of sermons. Instead of listening, he was thinking about his business. PRAYER OF THE DAY - ...*Blessed Lord, since you have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them....* Called me from distraction at age five. **"Seek the LORD while he may be found! Call on him while he is near! Let the wicked man abandon his way. Let an evil man abandon his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will show him mercy. Let him turn to our God, because he will abundantly pardon."** (Isaiah 55:6f EHV)

"The seed that was sown on rocky ground is the person who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, yet he is not deeply rooted and does not endure. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he immediately falls away." (13:20f) A church elder commented that new members were often excited to take on all sorts of responsibilities in the church. But the one thing the elders could not get them to do was to go to Bible class. Little by little their church privileges became a burden as worship attendance sagged. Finally they fell away from the flock. Whether the world wins in death, or life wins by the Spirit depends on growing **"in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."** (2 Peter 3:18) Roots deep in God's Word grow on God's plans and God's ways. (Isaiah 55:8)

Some seed got choked out by the weeds of *worry* and *the deceitfulness of wealth* threatening our culture and our congregation. Experts say that the largest transfer of wealth in history is going on right now between generations. Our sinful flesh feeds on the passions and pleasures promised by wealth which can't even guard itself from thievery, taxes, and waste. **"Just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways, and my plans are higher than your plans."** (Isaiah 55:9) One professor told us that the road to hell is paved with preachers' skulls and bleached bones of parishioners who got too busy pursuing worldly wealth and pleasure. Fun is shallow; joy in God's Word is lasting. Vain deceit in philosophy and human tradition can choke your soul. **Be careful that nobody spoils your faith through intellectualism or high-sounding nonsense....** (Colossians 2:8 Philips)

Did you notice that the same powerful *seed* is sown on all soils in Jesus' *Parable of the Sower*? God's Gospel goes everywhere, but it needs good soil to bear **"a hundred...sixty...thirty times more than was sown."** Preparing that soil takes the skill of the gardener who asked for time on the fruitless fig tree. Rather than cut it down, he asked the owner, **"Sir, leave it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put fertilizer on it. If it produces fruit next year, fine. But if not, then cut it down."** (Luke 13:8f)

Co-workers of our Lord, stop worrying how folks feel about you. **"Dig it and dung it"** is painful with the spade of God's law, but we all need that too. The fertilizer of His Word sometimes stinks to our sinful flesh, like the green grass compost this fifth grader spread right under the bedroom windows. Surprisingly, my family didn't complain, and the hydrangeas really grew.

My preaching fears were answered years ago by a wise sister in faith: "Do you pray in your text study...writing...before preaching...?" "Yes." "Then why don't you trust God to answer your prayers?"

Preach You the Word with the Sower's reckless love and trust **Our fruitful Harvest Lord** to bless His Word like **"rain and snow [that] water the earth [giving] seed to the sower and bread to the eater...[So] my word that goes out from my mouth will not return to me empty. Rather, it will accomplish whatever I please and...succeed in the purpose for which I sent it."** (Isaiah 55:10f) God's promise. **Preach You the Word.** Amen.

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