

The Twenty First Sunday after Pentecost

Luke 8:5-15

A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be? And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience. (KJV)

Believers are blessed to hear the word of God at each Divine Liturgy. God's Holy Church proclaims the word of God consistently through the centuries and in all parts of the world.

The word of God is available in written and recorded form for individuals interested in further study and development in Christ. Each person experiences the word of God differently.

The Gospel describes different responses by those hearing the word of God. Some hear the word but it does not take root in their personal lives. In others the word of God takes root but eventually dies or is choked off by worldly cares.

The word of God takes firm root in some believers and remains throughout life. According to the Gospel these individuals bring forth fruit with patience. Holding firm to the word of God requires valuing the word of God.

Ascribing value to the word of God comes from within the believer. The Church teaches the word of God and the value. The believer's acceptance of this value and making it a part of daily life rests with the believer.

According to the Gospel read on Pascha each year, Christ is the word and the word became flesh and dwelt among us (Jn.,1:17) The way a believer lives in Christ determines the fruits of his or her life.

Jesus said many years ago these enlightening words: "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." (Lk.11:28) During the course of each day and throughout life, believers are challenged to hear and keep the word of God.

Thank God for the accessibility of the word of God. Thank God for the martyrs and faithful through the centuries having protected and lived the word in God's Holy Church.

Deep in the heart, mind and soul, believers determine their love of the word of God and their interest in keeping it. Worldly cares and temptations strike at the believer in attempts to dilute the focus on keeping the word of God.

Home, work and community environments do not always lend themselves to believers holding to the word of God. Only the most focused of believers can ward off the distractions and hostilities to the word arising during the course of the day.

Societal values can run counter to the word of God. Often society promotes alternatives to the word that are perilous to the soul. Discernment is necessary to avoid the dangers that creep into the home, the workplace and community.

Love of God springs from the heart, mind and soul. Love of God is learned and strengthened through nourishment by God's word. Embracing the word of God transforms the believer with the passing of time.

Consistent effort is necessary to cling to and learn from the word of God. A willingness to sacrifice time and interests of lesser value brings greater benefit with the word of God.

Exercising patience over the long-term proves the wisdom of the Scriptures as fruit develops and is manifested. Personal life changes when the word of God governs daily actions.

God's Holy Church provides the necessary nourishment through the word of God. Believers are required to make the effort to embrace the word and make the word a part of daily life.

The Christian life entails effort, sacrifice and resolute focus. Perils to the soul exist throughout life. Adhering to the word of God enables believers to begin again and again when having lost focus or slacked in effort.

Joy exists in the word of God and is derived from the word of God. Joy abounds in life when the word of God is central to life. Believers learn of Christian joy through living in Christ, abiding in Christ and loving Christ.

Living in Christ entails not being corrupted by the world. Living in Christ requires the ability to see the falsehoods existing in the world and the perils to the soul.

The word of God gives focus to life for believers and direction for daily life. Perils and temptations of the world are overcome when believers arm themselves with the word of God.

Be grateful and appreciate God's Holy Church. Be thankful for the presence of the word of God as part of daily life. Be resolute and joyful in having the word of God as guide to the Heavenly Kingdom and eternal life.

The Twenty First Sunday after Pentecost. Holy Greatmartyr Arethas and Martyrs with him. October 24/November 6, 2022. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.

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