

## NEXT STEP: STUDY &amp; SHARE

## READINGS

Isaiah 55:10-13

Psalm 65:9-13

*Your paths overflow with plenty. (v11)*

Romans 8:1-11

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, we thank you for planting in us the seed of your word. By your Holy Spirit help us to receive it with joy, live according to it, & grow in faith & hope & love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior & Lord. Amen.

## SERMON TEXT- Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

...<sup>18</sup>“Hear then the parable of the sower. <sup>19</sup>When anyone hears the word of the kingdom & does not understand it, the evil one comes & 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 & immediately receives it with joy; <sup>21</sup>yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, & 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 & the lure of wealth choke the word, & it yields nothing. <sup>23</sup>But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word & understands it, who indeed bears fruit & yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, & in another thirty.”

## LISTENING TO . . .

**GOD-** *Christian life is rooted in the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit*

1. What connections do you find with the lesson from 06.14, Matthew 9:35--10:8? *See Galatians 6:6-9*
2. How are preaching & the sacraments (Baptism & Communion; also, if you're willing, Confession & Forgiveness) either sowing or reaping? Think in terms of v23. *See Small & Large Catechisms: Baptism, Office of Keys/Confession, Lord's Supper available <bookofconcord.org>*

**EACH OTHER-** *Sharing & growing with our brothers & sisters in Christ*

3. Name 5 times when you simply refused to listen or understand what God was saying in a situation. How were they resolved? Did you learn to listen or ignore more? *See Isaiah 6:9-10*
4. Math time: if the sower expected a 10x yield, the seed fell evenly, & the soils were of equal area, he'd net 40 units at harvest. But, three areas give 0x & one gives abundantly. If the good soil was evenly divided in 30x, 60x, & 100x areas, he nets 63 units at harvest. That's 160% of expectations from 25% of his land & seed. That one plot of good soil produces at 600%! When have you seen God bless like this in everyday life? *Hint- you may need to think of a longer "season" than a few weeks or months.*

**NEIGHBORS-** *Bearing fruit for those not yet our brothers & sisters*

5. Increasingly the world views the Church & congregations as bad soil yielding nothing but "intangible religious benefit," as the IRS says. As congregations continue to shrink relative to the population, what would you point to as your congregation's tangible contribution to the *common good* (1 Corinthians 12:7)?
6. It could be argued that if one really believed their congregation is "good soil" where the word bears fruit abundantly, they'd be including & inviting as many people as possible to experience it. What thorns choke out (v22) your doing just that?

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost  
Series: God Grows His Church

07.12.20  
Rev. Jared Stillions, STS

Are You Growing

*Some folk are bad soil in which nothing from the kingdom grows.  
Our lives as baptized believers have all four kinds of soil.*

-Notes-

KEY VERSE: ...The one who hears the word & understands it,  
who indeed bears fruit & yields, in one case a hundredfold,  
in another sixty, & in another thirty. (v23)

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-NEXT STEPS MEMORY VERSE-

The word is very near to you;  
it is in your mouth & in your heart. (*Deuteronomy 30:14*)

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