

Read: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

Be Rooted in the Word

Matthew 13:23

But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Did you plant anything this summer? Did you try growing any fruits or vegetables, maybe even some grass on your lawn? If you did, by this time you probably figured out whether your family has some super skills for gardening . . . or maybe next time you should hire a professional.

It's so easy, and yet also so difficult! The idea of growing things is simple. Even the smallest child knows—you need the seeds, some soil, and plenty of water and sun. Yet there's much more to it! Some seeds land on bad, rocky soil. Some aren't deep enough and never grow roots. Other seeds don't get enough water, while others might die from all the weeds. The idea of growing things is simple, and yet it can be very complicated and difficult!

Faith is really the same way. It's so easy yet can be very complicated and difficult! How we get faith is very simple. Someone plants the seed—someone preaches the powerful Word of God to us, God works in our hearts to believe the good news of Jesus as our Savior, and there is faith. Simple!

At the same time, Jesus tells us in the parable for this week that it is often much more complicated than that. Sometimes people hear God's Word and want nothing to do with it—they don't even care. Sometimes people listen to the Word for a little while, but soon enough turn away. Others listen to God's Word, but over time the things of this world become more important to them.

Today Jesus gives us both a warning and a promise. The warning is that if you don't take care of your faith—if you don't continue to feed your faith, there will not be any strong roots and your faith will be in danger. At the same time, Jesus us gives us a beautiful promise. When we listen carefully to God's Word and feed our faith with God's Word, it will grow and produce in us a big crop! So just like a little seed might grow into a tree that produces lots of fruit, so God's Word can grow faith in our hearts that produces all kind of good work—fruits of love for God and for other people.

God gives to us all kinds of spiritual “farmers.” People like parents, grandparents, pastors, teachers, family, and friends spread the seeds of God’s Word to us. Listen carefully to what God has to say and watch how the Master Farmer—God—will cause your faith to grow!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for Younger Children

- What things are necessary for seeds to grow?
- Who first shared God’s Word with you? Ask your parent(s) if you don’t know.

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- How does God feed and nourish your faith?
- What kinds of “fruits” do we produce when we feed our faith regularly with God’s Word?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Agree or Disagree: Some people are “rocky soil,” so we shouldn’t even bother sharing God’s Word with them.
- Evaluate this statement: Good spiritual farmers—good preachers of the Word—will bring many people to faith.

Closing Prayer:

Dear Lord, help me to listen carefully to your Word, and then bless me by causing my faith to grow. Help me also to spread the seeds of your Word to other people. Amen.

Hymn: CW 293 – God’s Word is Our Great Heritage

God’s Word is our great heritage
And shall be ours forever;
To spread its light from age to age
Shall be our chief endeavor.
Through life it guides our way;
In death it is our stay.
Lord, grant, while worlds endure,
We keep its teachings pure
Throughout all generations.