

19. September 2020

“The fruit of the Word of God”

Lk 8,4-15

With a large crowd gathering and people from every town finding their way to him, he told this parable: 'A sower went out to sow his seed. Now as he sowed, some fell on the edge of the path and was trampled on; and the birds of the air ate it up. Some seed fell on rock, and when it came up it withered away, having no moisture. Some seed fell in the middle of thorns and the thorns grew with it and choked it. And some seed fell into good soil and grew and produced its crop a hundredfold.' Saying this he cried, 'Anyone who has ears for listening should listen!' His disciples asked him what this parable might mean, and he said, 'To you is granted to understand the secrets of the kingdom of God; for the rest it remains in parables, so that they may look but not perceive, listen but not understand. 'This, then, is what the parable means: the seed is the word of God. Those on the edge of the path are people who have heard it, and then the devil comes and carries away the word from their hearts in case they should believe and be saved. Those on the rock are people who, when they first hear it, welcome the word with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of trial they give up. As for the part that fell into thorns, this is people who have heard, but as they go on their way they are choked by the worries and riches and pleasures of life and never produce any crops. As for the part in the rich soil, this is people with a noble and generous heart who have heard the word and take it to themselves and yield a harvest through their perseverance.

The crucial question for us is how to learn to listen better, so that the Word can enter our hearts, stay there and bear fruit on a persevering journey with the Lord!

The Lord has made it clear to us what happens if we do not attentively receive the Word: The devil robs the Word, it does not penetrate deep enough into us, worries, riches and pleasures of life prevent the fruit of the seed of the Word of God!

So how to listen well?

The Word of the Lord loves to be received in silence, it takes on a completely different meaning if we take our time and listen attentively to it also in the Holy Mass.

It is recommended to listen to the daily meditation of a text from the Holy Scriptures, e.g. the readings of the day! In order to deepen the words, it is good to reflect on them, to move them in our hearts, to pause in our thoughts on the text and to immerse ourselves in it!

Helpful might be good literature with biblical interpretations, also good speeches and sermons can be very helpful in receiving the Word! However, care should be taken to ensure that the interpretation of Scripture is not imbued with a modern spirit which likes to relativize or has a false or inadequate theology as its basis! Then the faithful would neither be taught in the Spirit of God nor would the Word of God reach the heart!

The Word of God wants to shape, to gladden our hearts, to clear our minds and help us to understand the circumstances of our lives in the light of God!

Again and again we should seek silence if possible! Let us remember, that the temple of the Lord is not a place for private conversations! Only in silence will the presence of God in the Holy Sacrament and in His Word be revealed deeper.

The Word of God has such power that even one sentence spoken into our heart can bring about a transformation. The Desert Fathers knew the practice of "chewing again" the Word of God! This means that they repeated a certain sentence of the Holy Scriptures again and again in their hearts and minds! We too can make this a fruitful practice: take a sentence out of the readings and repeat it like a prayer of the heart! For example, when we take the word "*Look at the birds in the sky. They do not sow or reap or gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them*" (Mt 6,26), and internalise this sentence in a variety of ways, it will help us to deal better with unnecessary worries and deepen our trust in God!

The same is true for other words that we can consciously choose in order to root certain words of the Scriptures even more deeply in us. To strengthen trust in God, I like to recommend this way, to take a proper Word and repeat it constantly in the heart, especially in case we find it hard to trust.

Related to the element of repetition is the daily, persevering reading! The Word of God should become an integral part of our lives, it should always belong to it! Let us remember the Word: "*Human beings live not on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.*" (Mt 4,4)!

This spiritual nourishment may not always taste so good at the beginning! But the longer we meditate and live in the Word of God, the more it unfolds its power in us! We should read it with perseverance, not just for a while and then neglect it again! Once it lives in our receptive heart, it will bring forth wonderful fruit! May God give hundredfold fruit!