



8. March 2022

## The richness of God's Word Part 1

**Isa 55:10-11**

**For, as the rain and the snow come down from the sky and do not return before having watered the earth, fertilising it and making it germinate to provide seed for the sower and food to eat, so it is with the word that goes from my mouth: it will not return to me unfulfilled or before having carried out my good pleasure and having achieved what it was sent to do.**

In the Catholic Church we know this expression: we nourish ourselves at both tables of the Lord, both the table of the Word and the table (the altar) of the Eucharist. Both are necessary! The table of the Word precedes the table of the Eucharist.

In today's reading, we have heard that the Word of God does not return to Him empty, but accomplishes what He commands. To explain it better, God uses the comparison of rain, which does not return to heaven empty, but soaks the earth. The Word of God, as we know, is God Himself. In John's Gospel it is written: *"In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word was God."* (Jn 1:1). And further on it goes on to say: *"the Word became flesh, he lived among us"* (v. 14). The eternal Word of the Father became man in the Person of Jesus.

This Word, who became man, speaks to us day after day in the Holy Scriptures. In them we can read what Jesus, the incarnate Word, worked in our midst. Even if we have not been able to physically meet Jesus, the incarnate Word, his Spirit is present when we hear or read the Word. If this Word falls on a willing heart, the Spirit of God is communicated to it: the Word enlightens the understanding and strengthens the will, so that, with our free consent, that for which God sent that Word can be realised.

The Word of God is for us orientation, clarity, nourishment, life... This Word can also be "ruminated". Under this concept, the desert Fathers understood that the Word had to be moved in the heart. Perhaps they had in mind those animals called "ruminants", which digest food by chewing it over and over again and drawing new nutrients from it each time. Although such a comparison may sound amusing at first, it certainly contains great wisdom, for here it is not just any insignificant word, but the very Word of God.

Jesus himself also speaks to us about the internalisation of the Word of God. In the

parable of the sower (Mt 13:3-9.18-23), he shows us the need for the soil (meaning our soul) to be well prepared, so that the seed (which is the Word) can take deep root and bear fruit.

In this parable, the Lord begins by showing us the negative conditions that prevent the Word from penetrating deeply: For example, when we do not pay enough attention to it or when we get carried away by the worries of everyday life, forgetting the Word we have received. If we consider the non-stop information offered to us by the modern media, we know well how many impressions bombard our souls daily in the present time. It is obvious that if we allow ourselves to be carried away by this stream of information, the Word will not be able to penetrate us so deeply, or we will not perceive it at all.

The Word of God requires an attentive heart. Silence is an important disposition to receive it, for God wants to speak to us in such a way that we experience inwardly the specialness of His Word.

But apart from dispersion, there are also other obstacles that prevent the Word of God from bearing fruit in us and that this fruit remains. Another difficulty mentioned by Jesus in the parable of the sower arises when persecutions come because of the Word; persecutions because, when we act and speak according to the Word, we will often be in opposition to what the world does and says.

I give the example of a concrete reality that is always close to my heart: abortion. If we clearly denounce that the murder of an innocent child is a grave crime that no one can allow, least of all the state, which has the task of protecting its citizens, then we oppose what is "politically correct", the so-called "mainstream".

But it can also easily happen that we are afraid or fear the consequences that might follow, so that we prefer to no longer make our opinion on abortion known in accordance with the truth of the Gospel. This situation I have described would be an example of what Jesus warns against: that because of persecution the Word is no longer defended. This indicates that the Word has not yet taken deep root in the heart to do what it was sent to do.

Today we have addressed the obstacles that prevent the Word of God from bearing abundant fruit in the field of our heart. Tomorrow we will see how we can prepare the ground for it to take deep root.