**20th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, One God. Amen.

Christ often taught in parables. He told stories because people always like to hear a good story. That’s one of the ways we learn, by listening and processing.

As the Good Teacher, Jesus knew that He couldn't just talk straight, give all the details, to some of the people, they would not be able to understand. So He spoon-fed them, so to speak, by telling them parables, by giving examples of what the Kingdom of God might be like.

So today’s parable talks about the sower who, as he is sowing, is casting seed really wide. Some seed falls on the road, some on the rocks, some is eaten by the birds, and then some falls on the good soil and gives fruit.

As Christ explained to His disciples, the Sower is God, the seed is the Word of God, which is one of the names we use for Jesus Christ. And the different ground or soil the seed falls on is – us.

Where the seed falls, depends on how it grows. How we hear the Word of God, how we react to it shows what kind of Christians we are.

The seed is the word. We interact, for the most part, through a spoken word. Spoken word used to have power. People agreed to contracts through the spoken word. Promises were given and taken seriously. There was no empty talk involved. No one would throw around their words.

Times have changed, spoken word has lost its significance. I can promise to you anything I want, and even if you have it on tape, I would still not be liable by today’s standards.

But one thing has not changed about the spoken word – our words reflect our inner selves, the state of our heart.

Our words reveal our Christian conscience and our faith. Spoken word still shows what kind of person I am.

In Christianity spoken word is still important. For example, we say aloud the Creed, “I believe in one God, the Father…”, during our baptism, which is effectively our confession of faith, our contract of faith. We don’t sign any documents stating that we believe this or that, we say it.

Or, in our tradition, we confess aloud. We don’t just do our confession in our heart, whatever that means. Internal repentance is an important first step towards confession, but internal repentance is insignificant without a confession that is done with a spoken word.

Ask any serious psychologist whether thinking about our problems is the same as talking about them?

Spoken word has lost its importance in our society, but it still is a big part of our faith.

The word is also what we call the Gospel. And in today’s parable the word of God is the seed that falls into our heart and only depending on our choices and our actions it either gives fruit or dies in vain.

This is our choice. God gives us as much as He can, without interfering with our freedom – we were baptized, God-willing we are coming to church regularly, we hear the word of God read from the Gospels, and we receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. The seed, the word of God, has been planted in our hearts.

In order to make our heart a good soil for the seed of Christ to grow, we always cultivate it by praying, by reading the Bible, by confession, and by fasting.

Our God is the great Sower. He is not the problem, He is the reason we are still alive. He has done His job –now He is waiting for the good soil so it can grow roots and give fruit inside our soul.

May we cultivate ourselves to become the good soil for the word of God to grow in us.

Amen