



Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Mark 4: 1-20.

On another occasion, Jesus began to teach by the sea. A very large crowd gathered around him so that he got into a boat on the sea and sat down. And the whole crowd was beside the sea on land. And he taught them at length in parables, and in the course of his instruction he said to them, "Hear this! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Other seed fell on rocky ground where it had little soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep. And when the sun rose, it was scorched and it withered for lack of roots. Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it and it produced no grain. And some seed fell on rich soil and produced fruit. It came up and grew and yielded thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold." He added, "Whoever has ears to hear ought to hear." And when he was alone, those present along with the Twelve questioned him about the parables. He answered them, "The mystery of the Kingdom of God has been granted to you. But to those outside everything comes in parables, so that they may look and see but not perceive, and hear and listen but not understand, in order that they may not be converted and be forgiven." Jesus said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? Then how will you understand any of the parables? The sower sows the word. These are the ones on the path where the word is sown. As soon as they hear, Satan comes at once and takes away the word sown in them. And these are the ones sown on rocky ground who, when they hear the word, receive it at once with joy. But they have no roots; they last only for a time. Then when tribulation or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. Those sown among thorns are another sort. They are the people who hear the word, but worldly anxiety, the lure of riches, and the craving for other things intrude and choke the word, and it bears no fruit. But those sown on rich soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit thirty and sixty and a hundredfold."

Introductory Prayer:

Lord, I want to spend these moments close to you. I believe that you are here with me. Take over my life more and more and make it what it was meant to be. Lord, I put my trust in you.

Petition:

Jesus, make the soil of my heart open to your word, so that it will bear fruit for eternal life.

1. Beware of the Thieves:

What the Father has planted in our lives is good. Goodness can bear fruit. But Christ has shown us that there is someone who does not want us to bear fruit. The devil tries to take goodness from our lives through enticing us with evil, filling our hearts with selfishness, and making us insensitive to the movements of grace in our soul. We need to renounce Satan every day by fixing our will on the goodness of Christ. This is done through sincere prayer and generosity of spirit.

2. Dig Deep:

The strength of our resolve is tested by the difficulties we face. If we go deeper in our prayer each day and build up the habit of letting go of our own ego, we can face the bad times with peace and trust. When our spiritual roots are not deep, we find ourselves disoriented, even defeated by the tribulations that are part of an authentic Christian life. Christ teaches us to dig deep. With him as our friend, difficulties become a way to show our love and to do something that has eternal value. If I don't fight, how can I merit a crown of victory?

3. Fruit in Docility:

In order to bear fruit we must be docile to God's word. But being docile does not mean being passive. For a Christian, docility to Christ and the Holy Spirit means willingness to work and serve. We are followers of the One who came to serve. The Spirit that is self-surrender moves us. To hear the Word of God and accept it means to make our lives an imitation of Christ's total self-giving day in and day out. God will grant fruit to our lives if we are willing to be other Christs in the here and now.

Conversation with Christ:

Lord, thank you for showing me how to bear fruit in my life. I want to imitate your self-surrender to the Father and to souls. I know that this requires a constant effort to go deep in my life and be docile to the Holy Spirit. Help me to live as a giver, not a taker. Your love will always be there to accompany me.

Resolution:

Today I will offer up a small sacrifice to ask God for the grace of acquiring the virtue that I need the most.