

Wednesday's Gospel: Trapped Among Thorns

Gospel for Wednesday in the 3rd Week of Ordinary Time, and commentary.

Gospel (*Mk 4:1-20*)

Again Jesus began to teach beside the sea. And a very large crowd gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea; and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. And he taught them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them:

“Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it had not much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil; and when the sun rose it was scorched, and since it had no root it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. And other seeds fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.” And he said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

And when he was alone, those who were about him with the twelve asked him concerning the parables. And he said to them, “To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables; so that they

may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand; lest they should turn again, and be forgiven.”

And he said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? The sower sows the word. And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown; when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word which is sown in them. And these in like manner are the ones sown upon rocky ground, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; and they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. And others are the ones sown among thorns; they are those who hear the word, but the cares of the world, and the delight in riches, and the desire for other

things, enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. But those that were sown upon the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.”

Commentary

In the parable of the sower, Jesus speaks about four possible outcomes for the seed that is sown. Today we will look at the seed that falls among thorns.

Our Lord explains to his disciples that the plant choked by the thorns symbolizes those who “hear the word, but the cares of the world, and the delight in riches, and the desire for other things, enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful” (vv.18-19).

Lukewarmness is a disease of the soul that we can see reflected in these thorns. Small lacks of charity that one fails to feel sorry for, small omissions in our relationship of love with God, seeking to satisfy the deepest longings of the heart in people or things that only increase this thirst, closing oneself off to the opinions or ways of thinking of others, etc. All these things can lead to an abundance of thorns choking the plant.

But none of these, by themselves, are capable of undoing the seed planted by God. To overcome them, all that is required is examining ourselves for a few minutes in God's presence and going with contrition to his arms so that he will heal us and fill us with the desire to fight again, to begin again.

Spending a few minutes each day examining our conscience helps us

see the thorns growing in our soul and around us. And with the act of sorrow at the end of the examination of conscience (the most important part), our Lord will help us remove the thorns and thus the plant will be able to develop in a free and organic way.

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