

20th Sunday After Pentecost

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

To the initiated, the parables of Jesus Christ reveal the depths of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to the uninitiated they hide the true meaning. “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,’” the Savior told his disciples (Mark 4:11-12). Some scholars believe that it was due to the hidden content of the parables that Christ was not immediately arrested at the very beginning of his ministry. The Pharisees and Sadducees hung on every word of the Savior, hoping that they could have him arrested for heresy or for speaking out against the political regime. But the Lord spoke in such a way that only people with an open heart could understand him.

In recent decades, it has been suggested that with the beginning of the era of television and now of the Internet, the era of preachers has come to an end. Some even claim that preaching itself, as a genre, has lost its communicative and educational effect. What these critics do not understand is that the Word of God both works where it is heard and remains fruitless where it is heard. The action of the Word does not depend on the Word itself or on the sermon, but on the listener's willingness to hear and perceive.

When His disciples do not understand the meaning of one of his signs, Jesus asks them “Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes and not see, ears and not hear?” (Mark 8:17-18). It is not enough to have ears on the sides of your head. The Word of God is not heard with the ears, but with the heart.

No matter how small the seed, it has great power. Recently, scientists found seeds in one of the Egyptian pyramids. The age of this grain was estimated at over 3,000 years. But when it was planted, the grain sprouted and yielded a harvest. Plant a handful of apple seeds in the ground—and you will get a whole orchard. Plant a handful of acorns—a whole forest of mighty trees will grow.

The Word of God works in a similar way. Very few people heard the Savior's parable in person. His close followers only numbered 12, but time passed—and Christianity spread throughout the world...

Imagine three people suffering from the same disease. The doctor prescribes them the same treatment. Time passes. The first patient completely recovers. The second one recovers at first, but then the disease returns. The third patient ends up in even worse shape than he had been before the treatment. Why do the patients have these different results? Well, it seems that the first patient carefully followed the doctor's instructions, regularly taking the prescribed treatment. The second did the same at first, but when his symptoms disappeared, that patient stopped taking the medicine. The third patient was convinced that the doctor was lying, and never accepted the treatment at all.

Clearly, those who got a negative result should not blame the doctor for misdiagnosis and poor treatment. It is worth thinking about yourself and start doing what is prescribed...

Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, let us pay attention to listening to the Voice of God. Let us try to prepare our soul, prepare our heart, let us be filled with all the virtues of God. Then, the seed of the word of God, which the Lord has sown in us, may germinate and bear fruit and lead us to eternal life.