

Matt. 13:1-9, 18-23
July 16, 2017
6th Sunday After Pentecost

Use these questions to prepare yourself (and your family) for next Sunday's sermon. We encourage you to read the text each day and then discuss the questions provided. Not all (or possibly, not any) of these questions will be addressed in the sermon.

Day 1: Parables in the gospels are frequently difficult for the Pharisees (and often us!) to understand. Read Matthew 13:10-17 to obtain a little background on Jesus's reasoning for using parables. Jesus says the Jews, as God's chosen people are, "seeing [but] they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand" (v. 13). Can you think of some events from the Old Testament where the Jewish people ignored God and "closed their eyes" (v.15)? Why is God's Word sent out into the world (Hint: Isaiah 55:11-13)?

Day 2: Read Matthew 13:4 and 13:19. Jesus says "the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart." Have you heard the Word preached and then disregarded it? How does the Devil use our rejection of God's Word to pull and lure us into loving the sinful flesh?

Day 3: Read Matthew 13:5, 6 and 13:20, 21. Why should we be reading and studying God's Word as often as we can? Does God promise an easy life or one that will have "tribulation or persecution"? (v. 21)

Day 4: Read Matthew 13:7 and 13:22. How are Christians those who "receive seed among thorns"? (v. 22) If the thorns are "the cares of this world", what does Jesus warn will happen?

Day 5: Read Matthew 13:8, 9 and 13:23. How are Christians made into "good ground" by the Word? What events in our church life together make us fruitful Christians? Can you think of examples in your daily life that are part of the "crop" Jesus mentions? What promises are contained in these verses?