

Weekly Gospel Readings 2nd Sunday of Hator

Parable of the Sower

On this Sunday (11/19/23), the second Sunday of Hator, the Church reads from [Matthew 13:1-9](#) the Parable of the Sower. The Gospel passage begins with Jesus leaving the house, but why is this significant? Origen the Scholar interprets this verse ([Mt 13:1](#)) allegorically, explaining that Jesus leaving the house “is an act that springs from his love of humanity to leave the house and to go away to those who are not able to come to him.”

The verse also mentions that Jesus sits beside the sea, which, according to St. John Chrysostom, is so that no one can be at a disadvantage, so that the whole multitude can hear Jesus, and so that He can see them “face to face.” Being face-to-face with the people illustrates God’s love for humanity, showing how intimate God wants to be with us. However, many times when we are aware of God’s presence and when we are face-to-face with Him, we become overwhelmed with this uneasy feeling, telling Him, “Do not gaze at me because I am dark, because the sun has looked upon me” ([Song of Songs 1:6](#)). But why do we have this uneasy feeling? Gregory of Rome answers, “For when the Lord comes, he darkens the person whom he has touched closely by grace; for the closer we draw to Him, the more we know ourselves to be sinners.” Nevertheless, God tells us, “Behold, you are beautiful, my love; behold, you are beautiful; your eyes are doves” ([Song of Songs 1:15](#)).

Jesus Christ then begins to tell the multitudes parables, and He does this because parables give us glimpses of Him whose thoughts are not our thoughts and whose ways are not ours ([Is 55:8, 9](#)). To understand parables, we must first have an open and zealous heart for God. Then, when the Holy Spirit gives us grace so that these mysteries become unveiled, we become aware of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven ([Mt 13:11](#)), which the Gospels tell us lie hidden in the world since its creation ([Psalm 78:2](#)).

The first parable Jesus tells the multitude in [Matthew 13](#) is the Parable of the Sower. The parable can be broken into four situations. Let’s delve into each situation and meditate on their meaning.

1. Seeds along the path ([Mt 13:4](#)): A path is usually hardened and packed down because people tread upon it. Therefore, those with a hardened mind cannot even receive the word of God. And so the birds of heaven, in this case representing unclean spirits, come and devour the word of God as it can’t be planted in the heart.
2. Seeds on rocky ground ([Mt 13:5-6](#)): The rocky ground here is an individual who has been negligent of the faith they have been given. St. Cyril of Alexandria explains, “The reverence

these people have toward God is shallow and rootless. It is in times of ease and fair weather that they practice Christianity when it involves none of the painful trials of winter. They will not preserve their faith in this way if, in times of tumultuous persecution, their soul is not prepared for the struggle.”

3. Seeds among thorns ([Mt 13:7](#)): The thorns are the things of the world. While in this situation, the seed grows, it becomes destroyed because the individual here is concerned with the things of this world. St Cyril says, “Let us know well, the divine seeds can never flourish unless we uproot from our minds the worldly cares and rip off from ourselves the proud and vain riches.”

4. Seeds in good soil ([Mt 13:8](#)): The good soil here is a soul ready to receive God’s word. The soul here yearns for, meditates constantly, and cares for God’s word.

Let us end with a quote from St Augustine: “Upturn the good soil with the tool, take away the rocks from the field, wipe away all thistles from it...Be the good soil, and let each one bring forth a hundredfold, a sixtyfold, and a thirty fold.”

Sources

- Ancient Christian Commentary
- Bible ESV
- Catena, Commentary on Song of Songs
- Catena, Commentary on Matthew
- Father Tadros Yacoub Malaty, A Patristic Commentary on the Book of Luke
- Parables, St Mary Coptic Orthodox Church