

Weekly Gospel Readings
2nd Sunday of Hathor

Parable of the Sower

“He who has ears, let him hear.” [\(Mat 13:9\)](#)

On this Sunday, the second Sunday of Hathor, the Church reads from [Matthew 13:1-9](#) the Parable of the Sower. The Gospel passage begins with Jesus leaving the house ([Mt 13:1](#)).

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.” ([Origen, Commentary on Matthew](#))

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.” To sit “face-to-face” with God is an image of profound intimacy and God’s love for humanity. 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 speak to the multitude in 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 a receptive heart for God. Only to such souls does the Holy Spirit grant “the secrets of the kingdom of heaven” ([Mt 13:11](#)), which the Psalmist tells us mysteries “hidden from of old” ([Psalm 78:2](#)) but revealed in Christ.

[Matthew chapter 13](#) is known as the “Kingdom Parables” chapter. It contains seven parables speaking of the Kingdom of Heaven and most beginning with the phrase: “The kingdom of heaven is like...” In the first parable of this chapter Jesus tells the multitude in ([Matthew 13:1-9](#)) 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. St. John Chrysostom adds that the path represents a mind “careless and inattentive,” so exposed that nothing penetrates it.

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.” St. Augustine describes the thorns as “the love of the present age”, not evil things necessarily, but misplaced priorities that suffocate spiritual growth. This is the divided heart: trying to serve God and mammon at once.

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. As St. Basil the Great teaches that the good soil is a soul who “hears, retains, and practices” the 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 Bible
- Father Tadros Yacoub Malaty, A Patristic Commentary on the Book of Luke
- Parables, St Mary Coptic Orthodox Church
- St. John Chrysostom, Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew, Homily 44.1 (on Matthew 13:1).
- Origen, Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, Book X, Chapter 1
- St. Gregory the Great, Homilies on the Gospels, Homily 30.1 (on Luke 7:36–50)
- St. Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Sermon 41 (on Luke 8:4–15)
- St. Augustine, Sermon 101 On the New Testament.
- St. Basil the Great, Longer Rules, Question 95