

Isaiah 55:10-13  
Matthew 13:1-9 & 18-23

## SUCCESSFUL SOWING

Our brief reading from the prophet Isaiah is filled with glorious images of God's miraculous care for the earth and for all of God's people.

Let's first take a moment to reflect on some verses from Psalm 65:

“You visit the earth and water it, you greatly enrich it;  
the river of God is full of water;  
you provide the people with grain, for so you have prepared it.  
You water its furrows abundantly, settling its ridges,  
softening it with showers, and blessing its growth.  
You crown the year with your bounty;  
your wagon tracks overflow with richness.  
The pastures of the wilderness overflow,  
the hills gird themselves with joy,  
the meadows clothe themselves with flocks,  
the valleys deck themselves with grain,  
they shout and sing together for joy.”

Have you ever planted seeds, for flowers or vegetables?

Then you would know that the soil needs to be fresh or, if it isn't, it needs to be broken up with a rake or a shovel.

This aerates the soil, making it more hospitable for the seeds.

After sowing the seeds, they need to be watered, too.

So if you have done this, how did your project come out?

Did your plants flourish? I hope so.

And I hope you took time to thank God for his hand  
in your little garden.

Our word from the prophet Isaiah today is beautifully encouraging—  
note how he says “giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater”.

There’s a huge amount of time and work between  
the sowing of the wheat seeds and the baking of bread  
made from that wheat!

But look especially at God’s proclamation about his word  
going out from his mouth: “it shall not return to me empty,  
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing  
for which I sent it.”

God means business!

If we’re paying attention, we will get joy and peace;  
and all of nature will join us in praising God.

The good, strong trees will take the place of those  
that have thorns and briars, as an everlasting memorial  
to the goodness, love and mercy of our LORD God.

In our reading from Matthew,  
there are so many people crowding around him that he gets into a boat  
on the lake.

Being there might also have served to amplify his voice  
as he taught them.

The parable of the Sower is familiar, but it is challenging.

He starts with very concrete, real life examples of what can happen to seeds that have been sown.

Some have no chance at all, some have very short lives as plants, some are destroyed by other plants that are like weeds, depriving the new growth of its full chance for thriving in life.

But finally there are the successful seeds, growing and thriving and paying the owner back many times over.

Jesus goes on to explain that his parable is about sowing the Word of God, with the bad and good things that will happen to it as people receive the message.

The important lesson here is the person who hears the word and understands it is going on to bear fruit and share the gospel with others for their benefit, too.

Will you pray and plan to be one of those who give fruitful growth to the gospel?

It's very important to ask the Holy Spirit to prepare the soil for the gospel seeds: to prepare the hearts and minds of those you will tell about the gospel, to keep them open, fresh and eager to learn, and to keep away the enemy who would try to strangle your message and confuse the people you share it with.

Let us pray:

Wherever we are, Lord,

We know we are together, united in faithful prayer.

We are very grateful for our family of faith.  
We thank you Father God, Lord Jesus and Holy Spirit,  
we glorify you, we worship you,  
and we count on you, especially during these devastating times,  
to bless us with continuing faith and health.  
Equip us always with strong faith and the right words  
to adequately tell your story of salvation,  
that more souls may be harvested.  
You are our Rock and our Redeemer.  
You sustain us with your never-ending love.  
You encourage us to express with joy our love for you.  
In your precious name we pray,  
Amen.