

Luke 8.4-15
Sexagesima
24 February 2019
St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Topeka, Kansas

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Beloved in the Lord: grace be unto you and peace from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Have you ever done something incredibly foolish? You know what I'm talking about. Maybe back in high school it was some prank to impress a bunch of guys you wanted to think you were cool. Or maybe it was some overture toward a boy or girl totally out of your league. Or maybe it was devoting yourself to some lost cause—giving money to someone, for whatever reason, you knew would blow it; putting in a bunch of effort on a project that would never come to fruition; taking on a huge project the results of which you'd never see.

We'd call that foolish behavior. Right?

Well, today we meet the greatest fool of all in the parable Jesus is telling—and the fool turns out to be Jesus Himself. And as He speaks the parable—as He speaks the parable to *us*—He's actually *enacting* the parable. Making Himself the Fool. Which means that you and I, who hear this parable, are the ground into which the seed is sown.

But let's return for a bit to the foolishness of this Sower.

Seed is precious. I learned this the hard way when I killed my lawn a few years ago and re-seeded the entire thing. It's precious, and you don't want to waste it. So my first pass around the yard as I spread the seed was along all the flower beds. Very carefully. To make sure not one seed fell into the beds. And then I went along the sidewalk and curb. Same thing. No seed in the street, no seed on the sidewalk, no seed on the driveway. Why? Because I wasn't going to waste a single seed on where it wouldn't grow or on where it was just going to get pulled out.

But, look, fellow-redeemed: if there were a job opening for a seed-sower, Jesus would never get it. Never. Because He's foolish. He just stands wherever He happens to be and throws out His seed. It lands on the hardpan where everyone tramples it to dust. It lands on the rocks—as good as sowing seed on your curb at home. It lands in weeds—that bramble of honeysuckle and poison ivy you have along your fence line. And only some of it—only some of it—lands where it'll grow. Jesus' application for the job wouldn't even get a second look.

And that's the first big take-away today: Jesus does what is absolutely foolish with His Word—with His twinned words of Law and Gospel.

What's the seed of the Law going to do to a hardened sinner and heart like Pharaoh's, except make it more obdurate? But Jesus throws it even on that rock.

What's the Gospel of the free forgiveness of all sins going to do for someone who gets involved with Christianity looking for all the wrong things except be nothing but a big waste of time? And yet, Jesus wastes the seed of His holy Word even on that.

What's the point of casting seed among those who are so enamored of their weekends and their vacation property and their preoccupations with all that life has to offer that the seed hardly gets a chance to germinate before those weeds shade it out and crowd it out? Yet, even so, Jesus throws His seed even there!

Look at how foolish He is! He sowed it in Noah's day, and they laughed Noah to derision. He sowed it among the ancient Israelites, richly, and they scorned it. Today He sows it in Africa and Asia, where people worship dead ancestors and trees. He sows it in South America and Europe and North America, where godlessness increases by the day.

He even sows it in Topeka, Kansas!

He sows like that if only some might fall on the good soil. And He sows it among weeds—if only the good seed might not be choked out. On hardpan—if only it won't go in one ear and out the other and you forget it all before you've left church. On the rocks—if only the seed can find some crack in your heart and put down deep roots.

And with that we've struck on the ingenuity of this foolish sower.

He sows like a fool so that He might sow His seed *even among us*.

And right now, that's all that matters.

Because what that means is that He desires nothing quite so much as your salvation.

His call to you to look at your life in the light of His holy Law and see yourself for what you are—a hell-bound sinner, even one who'd prefer the Sower's Word to go in one ear and out the other rather than let it stir your conscience. He means it!

His call to you by the clear sweetness of His Gospel that all your sins are forgiven for the sake of His holy innocent suffering and death—not by the good you've done, not by the evil you've avoided, but by His blood alone—He's dead serious about that too. That's the whole point. To save you through His blood!

The Sower doesn't sow His Word out so foolishly because He *hopes* it'll get trampled by the wayside, shriveled in the sun, or choked out by weeds—but so that it will find good soil. Even here in the U.S. Even here in Kansas. Even here in Topeka. Even in *your heart*.

Now look. Maybe your soil hasn't been all that good. Maybe the weeds of life are shading out the precious seed. Maybe the birds have been working overtime to swoop down and eat up the seed. Maybe you've hardened yourself to what the Lord Jesus proclaims—you've heard it all before. Blah, blah, blah.

If that's so, then despair. Despair of yourself. You have no hope.

But don't despair of the Sower.

Because this Sower is so foolish that even while you were a sinner and God's enemy, Christ died for *you*.

That's the ultimate foolishness of God: His holy Cross. There He was made weak that you might be made strong. There He plays the fool, that you might be made wise unto salvation. There God squanders His

Best—His own dear Son—to make you His own dear child, you, who for your sin and rebellion against God Himself counted for nothing.

And having foolishly won for you on His holy Cross life and heaven and salvation and rescue from death and hell and the forgiveness of all your sins in His blood He keeps on playing the fool. He keeps on foolishly sowing away. Casting the seed of the Word of Christ hither and yon. So that everyone who hears it may repent and be saved. Even you.

Because, according to His promise, His Word will not return to Him void. If He has sent it out to find good soil, it will. New life in Him springing up to everlasting life.

But there's another entailment of that. His Word will not return to Him void. It will do something. To the hardened against the Word, it will bring further hardening. Just look at Pharaoh. For those who prefer to grow weeds in their garden rather than the good seed—well, the Lord is good and gracious, and He makes the sun to shine on the good and the wicked alike. And those weeds will grow. Just like you want them to. And for those who've come to the Holy Christian Church for all the wrong reasons—the heat of the sun will expose them, too. They'll wither and die.

Pray the foolish Sower that that may never be you!

And only pray that He would continue to sow His Holy Word among you. Without it you're just an empty lot.

But with it, you will bear fruit a hundredfold. Patiently and constantly receiving all the gifts of the Lord—His Word, His Sacrament. And at the harvest at the end of the age, the Sower who shed His holy blood for you will take you into His everlasting kingdom. And there you will live with Him the life that in patience you've only now begun. The life of fruit bearing. The life of everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness.

Only let Him keep playing the Fool.

God grant to you all for Christ's sake—for the sake of the foolish Sower.

Amen.

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