

Today Jesus tells us the parable of the farmer sowing his seed for a crop. Jesus speaks of something anyone who has ever planted seed knows. If any of us have ever planted a garden or a farm, we know the importance of making the ground ready to receive the seed. Till it, maybe water it, cover it over so the birds and animals will not eat the seed or we will be left with nothing. So it is striking how seemingly careless the farmer Jesus describes is. He doesn't open the ground, clear away stones or weeds. The farmer simply goes along scattering the seed everywhere. Not a careful farmer. Not a thrifty farmer. Not a farmer wise in the ways of the world. But who is this farmer? It is God Himself. And the seed He throws is Himself, His Son, the Word of God. He throws Himself at us, the dust of the earth. And He makes no distinction between good, bad, indifferent, rich or poor, righteous or sinner. He throws Himself at us, at our hearts. The one who created us thinks nothing of Himself, is not self-important, but in humility He lowers Himself to lay at the door of our heart. How different God is from us and the wisdom of the world! The world would see a foolish farmer without common sense. Yet what God does reveals to us not only Who He is but how He is and how different He is from us and from what we think is wise. God is completely other than we are. This is why when the saints write Scripture or speak they struggle to find the words to write or speak because they have encountered a presence Who is beyond expressing in words. And it is He, God, who made us from the dust of the earth yet loves us in such a way that it is nothing for Him to throw Himself at us to take root in us. And truly, the bearing of the fruit as Jesus says in this parable, is not of the soil, it is not of us, it is of God because the Word of God is the seed. It is the seed that becomes the plant that bears fruit. But the seed needs good earth. The heart that is hard or embittered, stony or caught up in the cares of this life, God can do little with and He will not force us to receive Him. But in the heart that is open to receive Him, God Himself grows and much fruit comes forth from Him in the heart ready to receive Him. And this readiness to receive God means that we break up our heart, shatter our ego by our fasting and prayer, by our turning our face to God every day. And if we bear fruit, let us not think we have done something. That fruit is of God. Rather, any holiness in us is God who is holy in us. And we confess at the very same time that we are sinners, the very soil of the earth from which we came and to which we will return. Like our sisters and brothers in Christ, that is like all the saints let us see, on one hand, our own sinfulness, and on the other hand, see the holiness, the grace and the love of God, in which we share because of the God who scatters Himself upon our hearts, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, whom we worship and give thanks to from age to age. Amen.