

The Seed is Sown
Isaiah 55:10-13

The Word of the Lord works. Not some of the time, but all of the time. It always accomplishes what the Lord purposes. And it always succeeds in doing the thing for which the Lord sends it.

Something to keep in mind as we think about this is what God says through Isaiah in the verse immediately before our text. *For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts* (v. 9). The Word of the Lord works whether or not we see or understand how it is working.

The Word of the Lord works. Not some of the time, but all of the time. This is the promise given to us by God through Isaiah. And he paints us a little picture so the promise would be clear and we would be certain of the power and efficacy of the Word of God. Efficacy, that's a word you probably haven't used yet today. It means it does what it says it does.

The picture is of rain and snow. We are very glad these are the normal forms of precipitation, and not the hail that some had yesterday. Moisture comes down from the heavens and always waters the earth. Not everywhere all of the time, but when moisture comes, it always works. Even if it falls on soil that's already saturated, it moves on until it finds soil that isn't. Water always works. Not some of the time, but all of the time. It accomplishes the

watering of the earth, and it always succeeds, making the soil bring forth life.

And so it is with the Word of God.

And we need the Word of God to work. The people in Isaiah's day needed it; we need it. The thorns and thistles of the curse abound in our world – the plants in the ground, but also *the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches* mentioned in our Gospel reading. The people of Israel were helpless to save themselves. The same is true of us. Without the work of the Holy Spirit we would yield no good fruit. The devil would snatch away the word and we would remain barren. When tribulation or persecution comes we would wither away. The thorns would overwhelm us making us utterly unfruitful.

Our spiritual condition is like the desert: dead and dry, badly in need of something to give us life. *We cannot, by our own reason or strength, believe in Jesus Christ our Lord, or come to him* (Small Catchism).

And so the Father sends the Word down from heaven to water the earth. He sends His Son, the Word of God Incarnate, who takes on flesh and blood to come down and water the earth.

The only-begotten Son of God came down from heaven, was incarnate of the virgin Mary, and was made man. He took on flesh so that He could be crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, die on the cross to atone for our

sins, and water the earth with His precious blood. He was pierced by the sword, and from His side water and blood poured forth to water the earth.

As Jesus, the Word, hung there on the cross, He certainly didn't appear to be powerful. He appeared to be defeated and powerless. The scoffers assumed they had rightly rejected Him. Those who had followed Him were tempted to despair. The Word of God appeared to be powerless.

But then, in glorious victory, like a sprout shooting forth from the ground, the crucified and dead Jesus is raised from the dead. He is alive and well. That which was sown perishable is raised in glory and power and honor, immortal and imperishable. The incarnate Word of God died to conquer death and give new life to the world!

The cross is foolishness to those who remain in their sin, but to those who are being saved, it is the power of God (1 Cor 1:18). The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ on behalf of sinners is the power of salvation for all who believe.

Jesus came down from heaven to water the earth with His own blood. Now the preaching of Jesus serves to deliver the benefits of His blood to those who hear and believe. And just as surely as rain and snow come down from heaven to water the earth, the Word of the cross and the empty tomb now come down to give life to the world. This is the promise given by God through the prophet. It is given for us to know and to trust, so that

we may be certain that the Word of God will always work.

No matter how bleak the situation, the death and resurrection of Jesus reveals that the Word will accomplish the Lord's purposes and will succeed in bringing life to the world.

This world is full of sin and death. The curse of the fall still hovers over us. We are born in sin and add more to it daily. We would be lost forever unless delivered from sin, death, and everlasting condemnation. But the Father of all mercy and grace has sent forth His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Though His death appeared to be the end, it has now become the source of life. His glorious resurrection is the proof that He has overcome the curse and brought life and immortality to light.

The Word of the Lord accomplishes His purposes. Jesus Christ has succeeded in the thing for which He was sent. Now, He continues to send His Word down from heaven to water the earth. By His Spirit, He uses His Word to call, gather, enlighten, and sanctify the whole Christian Church on earth. Sinners like you and me are saved. In the desert of this world we are filled with life. Amen.