

**WEEKLY DEVOTION – Tuesday, January 10, 2022**  
**Pastor Bruce Kischnick, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany, IN**

**“Fifty-four Channels”**

**READING: Matthew 13:18-23 – Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away,. The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.**

The other morning I was channel surfing as is my want. I started at Channel 3 and I paged up to channel eighty-something. I don't have all the channels, but there's roughly 54 of them available for "my viewing pleasure". I paged through all of those channels but did not find one that even remotely interested me. Isn't that something? When I was a kid, we had three channels (four if the VHF channel out of Saginaw was coming through that day!). We always seemed to find at least one of the channels that captivated us. Now, with more channels to choose from than ever, I often find nothing but junk and trash and meaningless offerings.

A couple of weeks ago I watched my eight grandchildren open their Christmas presents. Each one of them must have received six or seven gifts, maybe more. The tree was almost obscured by the mountain of gifts "Santa Becky" had put around it. They dove in, paper flying, box tops flipped, and quick examinations of the contents. Then that one got laid aside, and it was on to the next gift. Now and again there would be exclamations of joy when one opened a gift they were really hoping for, but often as not there was a shrug of the shoulders and on to the next one.

Once again, when I was a kid, my Christmas gifts numbered in the low fives. I had three sponsors who each gave me a nice gift that I may have asked for. Mom and Dad would add one (plus some clothing, but nobody counted clothes as gifts when I was a kid!). That was about it. So I treasured every gift I got. There just weren't that many of them. And the only other chance you had of securing some toy or game you really wanted would be for your birthday. The folks did not and could not afford to buy you something every time you went to a store. Didn't happen!

In our text for today Jesus explains to his disciples the Parable of the Sower. In it Jesus describes how faith seems a hit and miss situation. Four people hear the same Word of God. One never pays any heed to it, given over to the evil one. The second is the enthusiast who is a quick convert until trouble or a challenge comes along, then he's out. The third is the one who comes to Christ only to later drift away because of all the choices, diversions, and temptations the world holds out to him. Finally the fourth one is the one in whom the Holy Spirit takes permanent residence, and all manner of good things are produced.

The one who especially came to mind for me today was the third one – the one who was overwhelmed and drawn away by all the leisure and luxury of our culture. We are inundated by STUFF and SHALLOWNESS. Everyone is trying to sell us something. Every ad tries to tell us that just one more THING or one more EXPERIENCE will make our lives rich and meaningful. It's all a lie! No one ever lay upon his deathbed and wished he had bought one more bauble or eaten one more delicacy or seen one more ancient ruin. All of

those things mean nothing at that moment. Millions of our countrymen fill their days and waste their lives chasing after the wind without much thought to their eternal destiny. And even those who have grown up in the church, been baptized and confirmed in the faith, all too often let their faith wither and produce stunted fruit because they have so many choices and so many opportunities they cannot discern what is most important.

Let us not lose sight of what is most important. Feed your faith. Fan into flame your desire to know the Lord better. Worship with real zeal. Serve the Lord with gladness. Then you will have treasure that the world cannot provide and does not understand. Having just celebrated our Lord's Nativity we know what a great gift was given us, so let us keep our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith, who lived with us and gave himself for us that we might live with him forever. Amen.

**PRAYER:**

**ANNOUNCEMENT(S):**

1. Watch for information about a SENIORS ANGEL TREE. We are going to give you an opportunity to adopt a Senior Citizen from our congregation or from our community who needs some basic items like toiletries, tissues, snacks, and other items they may not be able to afford. The Discipleship Team will collect and deliver what you have provided just in time for Valentine's Day next month.