



Sunday of the 7th Ecumenical Council

The Reading is from Luke 8:5-15

The Lord said this parable: "A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell along the path, and was trodden under foot, and the birds of the air devoured it. And some fell on the rock; and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns grew with it and choked it. And some fell into good soil and grew, and yielded a hundredfold."

And when his disciples asked him what this parable meant, he said, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God; but for others they are in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand."

Now the parable is this:

The seed is the word of God.

The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, that they may not believe and be saved.

And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy; but these have no root, they believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away.

And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature.

And as for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with patience." As he said these things, he cried out "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

Sunday of the 7th Ecumenical Council

On the Sunday that falls on or immediately after the eleventh of this month, we chant the Service to the 350 holy Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, which gathered in Nicaea in 787 under the holy Patriarch Tarasius and during the reign of the Empress Irene and her son, Constantine Porphyrogenitus, to refute the Iconoclast (those who did not venerate icons) heresy, which had received imperial support beginning with the Edict issued in 726 by Emperor Leo the Isaurian. Many of the holy Fathers who condemned Iconoclasm at this holy Council later died as Confessors and Martyrs for the holy Icons during the second assault of Iconoclasm in the ninth century, especially during the reigns of Leo the Armenian and Theophilus.

Discussion:

Christ explains this parable to his disciples.

In his interpretation, St. Theophylactos points out that 3 of the 4 outcomes of the seed, the Word of God, is unfruitful.

This is not because of the seed, but because of that which receives it. The choices we make will be the means by which the Word of God bears fruit within us or not.

Be aware that this is a continuous struggle: as we live our lives, our “soil” can become rocky, choked with thorns, etc. or become fertile and good, growing the Word in our hearts so that our lives glorify God.

By keep keeping the Word, doing so patiently (because many thing try to pull the Word away) and by doing good works (bearing fruit), we live in a way that pleases God.

Prayer is the first step in maintaining our souls as fertile soil.

To view this week’s video, copy and paste the link into your browser.

<https://www.goarch.org/-/be-the-bee-147-how-to-start-and-keep-a-prayer-rule?inheritRedirect=true>