

## 15<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

*A lectionary-based session adapted from 'Breaking Open the Word of God: Resources for Using the Lectionary for Catechesis in the RCIA – Year A', edited by K.M Hinman & J.P Sinwell, Paulist Press, 1986)*

### Readings:

*Isaiah 55:10-11*

*Romans 8:18-23*

*Matthew 13:1-23*

### Opening Prayer: Psalm 62

In God alone is my soul at rest;

my help comes from him.

He alone is my rock, my stronghold,

my fortress: I stand firm.

How long will you all attack one man  
to break him down,  
as though he were a tottering wall,  
or a tumbling fence?

Their plan is only to destroy:  
they take pleasure in lies.  
With their mouth they utter blessing  
but in their heart they curse.

In God alone be at rest, my soul,  
for my hope comes from him.  
He alone is my rock, my stronghold,  
my fortress: I stand firm.

In God is my safety and glory,  
the rock of my strength.

Amen.

*(From 'The Lord is My Shepherd', by Davis E. Rosage, Servant Books, 1984)*

Or listen to 'Only in God' John Michael Talbot

<https://youtu.be/HOSeOOT5LFQ>

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

*Share/Journal your reflections:*

1. Read the Gospel passage carefully. Reflect on this question: What kind of soil was I today, and during this past week?
2. Am I a person of hope? How do I reflect this
3. Think of a situation/event in which there were numerous "roadblocks" along the path to some accomplishment or destination. What were some of these "roadblocks" and what enabled you to continue to see beyond them?

### Looking at Gospel themes: choose either

1. Being open to the word of God
  - a. The parable speaks of deterrents to the seeds' growth. Share/journal examples of how the following deterrents have been a part of your life, and of others:
    - i. Busy-ness
    - ii. Lack of trust
    - iii. Pride
    - iv. False gods (power, money, other people)
  - b. "But what was sown of good soil is the man who hears the message and takes it in." How do we do this?
    - i. Reading/praying/meditating on the Scriptures.
    - ii. Confronting the Scriptures.



- iii. Accepting the challenge of the Scriptures.
  - c. How God's word multiplies in those who are open.
    - i. Give an example in Scripture of how this has happened.
    - ii. Give an example from your own life where this has taken place.
- 2. As Catholic Christians we are called to be a people of hope.
  - a. This parable may be seen as a story of hope.
    - i. In this parable we can trace Jesus' story of rejection and final triumph.
    - ii. We may also see this as a story of the growth of the kingdom.
    - iii. We may relate it to our life story with its pitfalls and roadblocks.
    - iv. Choose one of the above and retell the parable in this story form – growth in the Kingdom, your own story, or Jesus' story. Draw parallels from the original parable.
  - b. Scripture calls us to be a people of hope.
    - i. 1 Tim 2:5, 6-17 – hope in God.
    - ii. Heb. 6:18-20 – hope in Christ
    - iii. Rom 4:18 – Abraham is the model of hope
    - iv. Rom 5:2, Eph 1:18, Col 1:23 – we are called to hope.
  - c. As sowers of the seed we must have hope.
    - i. Recall a story of how your 'hope' touched another, or how you have been touched by the hope-filled spirit of someone else.

## GOING DEEPER: QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Reread the Gospel. It is the story of God's love poured out for you, his word sown as the food for your hunger.

- On what kind of soil will his word fall?
- What are those forces that work against you as you attempt to open yourself to the word?
- Pray for the grace to be strong. Pray for openness to God's word.

How will you read God's word differently this week?

How will his word be food that is multiplied through you?

What kind of seeds have I been sowing lately? Have they been seeds of hope?

How can my life better reflect the hope that I have in the Lord?

Think of one person who needs the hope that you have in your life. Make a plan to share this. Write it down and then share what you will do with someone close to you. Pray about the seed that you will sow.

## CLOSING PRAYER

Listen to 'Speak, Lord', by Gary Ault, <https://youtu.be/yZtwce2RyBk>

Prayer:

Almighty God and Father,  
 you have placed your word within our hearts,  
 through the Gospel we have received.  
 May your word within us grow  
 that we may yield good fruit  
 and be gathered into your kingdom.  
 May we live by your word  
 that others may reap what is sown by us,  
 and so come to know you,  
 and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent,  
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
 one God forever and ever. Amen.

*(Taken from 'Share the Word', July/August 1984, The Paulist Fathers)*

Listen to this recording of Psalm 23, or find one with which you are more familiar:

Stuart Townend, <https://youtu.be/-elQQayhpak>