

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

Psalms 65:1-8, 9-13

Isaiah 55:10-13

Romans 8:1-11

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

MESSAGE

“When the Word Takes Root”

Pastor Bruce

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

All four of today's readings speak in some way about **life, growth, fruitfulness, and the power of God's Word.**

- **Psalms 65** celebrates God as the One who waters the earth and crowns the year with abundance.
- **Isaiah 55** compares God's Word to rain and snow that accomplish God's purpose.
- **Romans 8** proclaims that life in Christ frees us from condemnation and empowers us by the Spirit.
- **Matthew 13** asks whether the seed of God's Word is taking root in us.

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

1. God Is the Source of All Fruitfulness Psalm 65:1–13

Psalm 65 is a song of praise to the God who hears prayer, forgives sin, establishes creation, and provides abundance.

The psalm begins with worship:

Praise belongs to God.

It then moves from the sanctuary to the whole earth. God is not only the One who forgives spiritual guilt; He is also the One who sustains creation. The hills, valleys, fields, rivers, grain, and flocks all testify to His provision.

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

1. God Is the Source of All Fruitfulness Psalm 65:1–13

Psalm 65 shows God as the giver of abundance. Isaiah 55 shows us one of the primary ways God brings that abundance: through His Word.

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

- 1. God Is the Source of All Fruitfulness Psalm 65:1–13**
- 2. God’s Word Accomplishes God’s Purpose Isaiah 55:10–13**

Isaiah compares God’s Word to rain and snow that come from heaven. Rain does not fall without effect. It waters the earth, causes seed to grow, and provides bread.

So it is with the Word of God. God’s Word does not return empty. It accomplishes the purpose for which God sends it.

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

- 1. God Is the Source of All Fruitfulness Psalm 65:1–13**
- 2. God’s Word Accomplishes God’s Purpose Isaiah 55:10–13**

This passage teaches us that God’s Word is not weak, uncertain, or merely inspirational. It is effective.

God speaks, and things happen.

- Creation begins by God’s Word.
- Prophets are sent with God’s Word.
- Hearts are convicted by God’s Word.
- Hope is restored by God’s Word.
- Lives are transformed by God’s Word.

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

- 1. God Is the Source of All Fruitfulness Psalm 65:1–13**
- 2. God’s Word Accomplishes God’s Purpose Isaiah 55:10–13**

But if God’s Word is powerful, why do some people remain unchanged? Romans 8 helps us see that the human heart needs more than information. We need liberation from sin and life in the Spirit.

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

3. The Spirit Makes the Heart Alive Romans 8:1–11

Life Through the Spirit

8 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. ³ For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

3. The Spirit Makes the Heart Alive Romans 8:1–11

⁵ Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. ⁶ The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷ The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸ Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

3. The Spirit Makes the Heart Alive Romans 8:1–11

⁹ You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. ¹¹ And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of^[e] his Spirit who lives in you.

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

3. The Spirit Makes the Heart Alive Romans 8:1–11

Romans 8 reminds us that fruitfulness is not simply a matter of trying harder. A spiritually dead heart cannot produce spiritual fruit on its own.

The soil of the heart must be made alive by the Spirit.

Paul is clear: the mind governed by the flesh leads to death, but the mind governed by the Spirit leads to life and peace.

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

3. The Spirit Makes the Heart Alive Romans 8:1–11

Psalm 65 shows us God's abundant provision. Isaiah 55 shows us the power of God's Word. Romans 8 shows us the necessity of the Spirit. Matthew 13 now brings the message directly to us: What kind of soil are we?

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

3. The Spirit Makes the Heart Alive Romans 8:1–11

Romans 8 begins with one of the great declarations of the gospel:

There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

This is the good news at the center of Christian faith. In Christ, guilt does not have the final word. Sin does not have the final authority. Death does not have the final victory.

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

3. The Spirit Makes the Heart Alive Romans 8:1–11

Paul contrasts two ways of life:

- Life according to the flesh
- Life according to the Spirit

The flesh represents human life turned away from God, ruled by sin, self, and death. The Spirit represents the life of God within us, giving freedom, peace, and resurrection hope.

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

4. The Condition of the Heart Determines the Harvest Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23

The Parable of the Sower

13 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. ² Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. ³ Then he told them many things in parables, saying: “A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴ As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵ Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

4. The Condition of the Heart Determines the Harvest Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23

⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. ⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. ⁹ Whoever has ears, let them hear.” **

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

4. The Condition of the Heart Determines the Harvest Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23

¹⁸ “Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: ¹⁹ When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. ²⁰ The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹ But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

4. The Condition of the Heart Determines the Harvest Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23

²² The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²³ But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

4. The Condition of the Heart Determines the Harvest Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23

In Matthew 13, Jesus tells the parable of the sower. A farmer scatters seed, and the seed falls on four kinds of soil:

The path

Rocky ground

Thorny ground

Good soil

The seed is the message of the kingdom. The soils represent different responses of the heart.

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

4. The Condition of the Heart Determines the Harvest Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23

1. The Hardened Heart

Some seed falls along the path and is quickly taken away. This represents those who hear but do not understand or receive the Word.

A hardened heart may still be religious. It may still hear sermons. It may still be present in worship. But the Word remains on the surface.

The danger is not that God has stopped speaking. The danger is that we stop listening.

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

4. The Condition of the Heart Determines the Harvest Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23

2. The Shallow Heart

Some seed falls on rocky ground. It springs up quickly but has no root. This represents a person who receives the Word with joy but falls away when trouble or persecution comes.

Shallow faith can be enthusiastic but unprepared. It wants blessing without depth, joy without endurance, and growth without roots.

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

4. The Condition of the Heart Determines the Harvest Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23

3. The Crowded Heart

Some seed falls among thorns. The thorns choke the plants. Jesus identifies the thorns as the worries of life and the deceitfulness of wealth.

This may be the most familiar soil for many of us. The Word is received, but it has competition. Anxiety, busyness, ambition, comfort, possessions, and distraction crowd the heart until spiritual fruit is choked. The issue is not always open rebellion. Sometimes fruitlessness comes from clutter.

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

4. The Condition of the Heart Determines the Harvest Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23

4. The Fruitful Heart

Some seed falls on good soil and produces a crop.

The good soil represents those who hear the Word and understand it. They receive it deeply. They allow it to take root. Over time, fruit appears.

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

4. The Condition of the Heart Determines the Harvest Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23

Fruit may look like:

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| • Faithfulness | Repentance |
| • Love | Patience |
| • Generosity | Forgiveness |
| • Courage | Peace |
| • Service | Witness |

The fruit may vary in measure, but the evidence of life is there.

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

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Connecting the Four Texts

These Scriptures move together in a beautiful progression:

1. Psalm 65 — God provides the conditions for fruitfulness.

The earth is watered and blessed by God.

2. Isaiah 55 — God sends His Word like rain.

The Word accomplishes what God intends.

3. Romans 8 — God gives His Spirit to bring life.

The Spirit frees us from condemnation and produces life and peace.

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

4. The Condition of the Heart Determines the Harvest Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23

Connecting the Four Texts

These Scriptures move together in a beautiful progression:

4. Matthew 13 — God calls us to receive the seed.

The Word bears fruit in hearts prepared to receive it.

Together they teach us:

God sends the rain, God gives the seed, God provides the Spirit, but we must open our hearts to receive His Word and allow it to bear fruit.

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“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”
LIVING IN GOD’S LIGHT

What exactly does this mean for US?

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

LIVING IN GOD’S LIGHT

What exactly does this mean for US?

The question is not whether God is generous. Psalm 65 says He crowns the year with abundance.

The question is not whether God’s Word is powerful. Isaiah 55 says it accomplishes God’s purpose.

The question is not whether freedom is available. Romans 8 says there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

The question is not whether the seed is good. Matthew 13 says the seed is the Word of the kingdom.

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

LIVING IN GOD’S LIGHT

What exactly does this mean for US?

The question is:

What kind of soil is my heart?

Is it hardened by pride or disappointment?

Is it shallow because faith has no roots?

Is it crowded by worry, wealth, and distraction?

Or is it open, receptive, and ready for God to produce fruit?

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

LIVING IN GOD’S LIGHT

What exactly does this mean for US?

The good news is this: soil can be changed.

By God's grace, hard ground can be broken.

Rocky ground can be cleared.

Thorny ground can be weeded.

Empty ground can become fruitful ground.

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”
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What exactly does this mean for US?

Call to Action

This week, ask God to cultivate your heart.

1. Invite God to Break Up Hardened Places

Pray:

“Lord, soften my heart where I have become resistant to Your voice.”

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

LIVING IN GOD’S LIGHT

What exactly does this mean for US?

Call to Action

This week, ask God to cultivate your heart.

2. Deepen Your Roots

Choose one spiritual practice this week — prayer, Scripture reading, worship, silence, service — and commit to it with consistency.

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

LIVING IN GOD’S LIGHT

What exactly does this mean for US?

Call to Action

This week, ask God to cultivate your heart.

3. Remove the Thorns

Identify one worry, distraction, or misplaced priority that is choking your spiritual life. Name it before God and take one practical step to surrender it.

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

LIVING IN GOD’S LIGHT

What exactly does this mean for US?

Call to Action

This week, ask God to cultivate your heart.

4. Receive the Word Daily

Read one of the sermon texts each day this week and ask:
“What fruit does God want to grow in me?”

“WHEN THE WORD TAKES ROOT”

LIVING IN GOD’S LIGHT

What exactly does this mean for US?

Call to Action

This week, ask God to cultivate your heart.

5. Live as Spirit-Filled People

Remember Romans 8: you are not condemned in Christ. Walk in the freedom, peace, and life of the Spirit.

Let the Word Take Root in YOU this week.
