

**Good Trees and Bad Trees
(8th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year C)**

Sirach 27:4-7—Speech as the Fruits of One’s Mind

1. Sieve vs. Refuse = “a man’s filth” and his “thoughts” (24:4)
2. Kiln & Vessels = “test of a man” is “his reasoning”/ “tribulation” (NAB) (24:5)
3. Fruit & Tree = “thought” discloses a person’s “mind” (24:6)
4. Speech: “do not praise a man before you hear him reason” (24:7)

Psalm 92—It is Good to Give Thanks to the Lord

1. Doxology: “it is good to give thanks to the Lord” and “to praise his name” (v. 1)

1 Corinthians 15:54-58—Victory over Death

1. Resurrection: is ultimately “victory” over “death” itself (15:54-55)

Luke 6:39-45—Good Trees and Bad Trees

1. Sermon Cont’d: series of short “parables” or “riddles” (Hebrew *meshalim*) (6:39-45)
2. #1: Two Blind Men: the spiritually “blind” cannot lead others (6:39)
3. #2: Disciple vs. Teacher: “not above his teacher”; he will be “*like* his teacher” (6:40)
4. #3: Specks vs. Logs:
 - a. Other’s Sin: you see the “speck” in your brother’s “eye” (6:41)
 - b. Personal Sin: you don’t see the “log” in your own “eye” (6:41)
5. #4: Good Tree vs. Bad Tree:
 - a. Good Tree = “good man” (virtues)
 - b. Bad Tree = “evil man” (vices)
 - c. Good Fruit = “good treasure of his heart”
 - d. Bad Fruit = “evil treasure” produces evil
6. #5: Heart and Mouth: “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (6:45)

The Living Tradition

Cyril of Alexandria: “With compelling arguments [Jesus] persuades us that we should not want to judge other, but should rather examine our own hearts, and strive to expel the passions seated in them, asking this grace from God. He it is who heals the contrite of heart and frees us from our spiritual disorders. If your own sins are greater and worse than other people’s, why do you censure them, and neglect what concerns yourself? *This precept, then, is essential for all who wish to live a holy life, and particularly for those who have undertaken the instruction of others.* (Cyril of Alexandria, *On Saint Luke 6*; trans. E. Barnecut, p. 85)

Venerable Bede: “Do you want to know which are the bad trees and what are the bad fruits? The apostle teaches us: “fornication, impurity, self-indulgence, idolatry, sorcery, malice, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, conflict, factions, envy, murder, drunkenness,

carousing, and things of this sort” (Gal 5:19-21)... He subsequently lists the fruits of a good tree. He says, “The fruit, however, of the Spirit, is charity, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, faith, gentleness, self-control” (Gal 5:22-23). (Bede, *Homilies on the Gospels* 2.25).

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (8th Sunday Ordinary Time, Year C)

1. What are the similarities between the parables in Sirach and Jesus parables in the Sermon on the Plain?

2. What are the implications of the fact that we should not just learn from Jesus, but that we should be “like him”?

3. What does Jesus mean when he says “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (Luke 6:45)? What do you use your mouth to speak about? What does it reveal about the abundance of your heart?

For Further Study

1. Pablo Gadenz. *The Gospel of Luke*. Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 135-37.
2. Arthur A. Just, Jr. *Luke*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament III. Downers Grove: IVP, 2003. Pp. 111-13.