**The Gospel Never Fails**

Have you ever felt the frustration of watching someone refuse to accept the plain teachings of the New Testament? Jesus’ parable of the Sower emphasizes that the seed of God’s word takes root and thrives in some men’s hearts and not in others, even though the seed is the same in every case. The message of the parable is that the condition of the person’s heart is the determining factor. Likewise, Jesus directed His disciples to “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned” (Mark 16:15-16). Jesus acknowledges in His command that some will believe and some will not. Here is the important question of the day: If we are teaching the good news on God’s behalf, has he failed to accomplish what He intended when the message is rejected?

God said through the prophet Isaiah, “As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:10-11). Of course, God wants everyone to be saved (1 Timothy 2:3-4), but by free will most are choosing the broad way that leads to destruction (Matthew 7:13). God’s word “goes forth from (His) mouth” when the gospel is preached and the intent of that preaching is always accomplished: the listener receives a knowledge of the truth and is given the opportunity to make a choice. In that, God’s word never fails.

The apostle Paul put it this way: “But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life” (2 Corinthians 2:14-17). If every generation of God’s people do their job, everyone around us will have the opportunity to smell the aroma of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Whether they perceive that aroma as the sweet aroma of life or the putrid stench of death is up to them. But in every case, they will have received the knowledge of the truth and given the opportunity to choose for themselves whether to accept the grace of God or to reject His mercy. In that, the word of God never fails.

**John McKee**

**West Murray church of Christ**