You shall indeed hear but not understand.

You shall indeed look but never see.

These are the words from Isaiah

that are read in the middle of the Gospel today.

He uses a parable because it is a short story

which uses images from daily life to help explain

the deeper realities of the Good News.

This Sunday, Jesus compares God's Word to seeds…

tiny things that grow into something greater than themselves.

Under the right conditions,

a small beginning yields a rich harvest.

He talks about seeds…the words of God

being planted on rocky, thorny, or fertile ground.

To amplify the importance of his words,

he also quotes the words of the prophet Isaiah,

"Let the people see with their eyes…and hear with their ears…

and understand with their hearts…and be converted."

So, today's Gospel has Jesus telling a teaching story

and actually giving the meaning of the story.

He tells us that according to the prophet Isaiah

half of the people won't understand the words of God.

Why do you think that is?

The short answer is because God gave us a free will.
All of us can take the words Jesus spoke…the parables he told…
the lessons he taught…either take them to heart
or we can ignore them and live our lives the way we want.

Let's look deeper into free will.
From the beginning when God created Adam and Eve,
he gave them free will.
The first big test of free will was not to eat the fruit
from the tree in the middle of the garden.
God said, "You shall not eat it or even touch it, lest you die."
The serpent tempted Eve by saying, "You will certainly not die."
Eve saw that the tree was good food…
desirable for giving wisdom.
So she ate it and gave some to Adam.
Adam & Eve had the free will to listen to God…or not to listen to God.
And they didn't listen.

St. Paul in our 2nd Reading recognized that
"all creation is groaning and we ourselves as we wait for redemption"…
meaning that all of us were affected
by the first sin of Adam & Eve.
However, Paul hoped that creation itself

would be set free from slavery
and share in the glorious freedom of the Children of God.
How did St. Paul hope we are to be free of the slavery of sin?
Further down the 2nd Reading it says,
"We ourselves who have the first Fruits of the Spirit
await adoption and the redemption of our bodies.
God gave all of us the gift of Grace from the Holy Spirit."
That's it! God sends us actual grace
from the Holy Spirit to help guide our free will.

Let me refresh your memory about what we learned
in Catechism Class about Grace.
Actual Grace or our gift from God
is God's help to do good and avoid evil.
God sends us his help everyday
even when we don't even deserve it.
God enlightens our minds and encourages us to do good.
God's Grace works through our conscience.
Because of our free will we are asked to cooperate with him.
The Holy Spirit will Never Stop helping us
do all that God knows is best for us
and we have the free will to use the Holy Spirit's help
or go through life our own way.

Too often, in our culture today people don't seem to be listening
to the Truths set by God.
People create their own truth and cancel anyone
that doesn't agree with them.

Here are a few topics that I am sure will get me into hot water
but I think it is important to hear the Truth.
Which side are you on?
Addiction to drugs & alcohol.
It is your free will to decide
if you want to poison your body or seek treatment.

The family. What is the Truth about your well-being and your family?

Pro-Life Advocates believe that at conception there are unique
chromosomes only belonging to humans.
A few weeks later a heartbeat.
A few weeks later a sonogram of a little human.
On the other hand, abortionists believe creation is a choice.
Our free will lets us decide.
Which is the Truth?

Sexuality. God created man & woman…not a combination of both.

What is the Truth?

What is the Truth about morality?
Have I made enough people uncomfortable
or should I talk about politics?
There seems to be less truth in politics nowadays.
Where do we hear the Truth today?

The Catholic Church has put together a moral compass
which helps guide our conscience.
It has based those guidelines on the Gospels,
Jesus's own words and the Holy Spirit gives us the Grace
to discern right & wrong.
All of us will stand before God at the end of our lives on Earth
and give an accounting of the fruit we bring
to the banquet table of eternal life.
Today at Mass, ask yourself, "How is Jesus calling me
to bear fruit for his Kingdom? How will I respond?"

Have your seeds been planted in rich fertile soil…
or eaten by the birds on rocky ground…choked out by the thorns?
It is a matter of your free will choice.