

### “THE SOWER, THE SEED AND THE SOIL”

*(Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23)*

**Grace, mercy and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.**

The parable of the sower and the seed in our Gospel today, like all the parables of Jesus, were illustrations Jesus used to get the point of his message across. and when they were first heard – they were heard in two ways.

1. Some found their message **offensive**;
2. Others found their message to be incredibly **liberating**, they heard them as good news about God’s love - about how God cares for the world and for everyone in it.

The offense in today's parable should be obvious to any of you who garden - and to any who have farmed or who are familiar with farming.

**Seed is a precious commodity.** It is not something that you spread around indiscriminately on rocky ground; pathways; or the roadside next to the paddock!. And you certainly don’t sow seed in the midst of thorn bushes and thistles!

To be sure - when you sow - be it by hand or by machine - some seed will fall in those places, but it is not something that you do deliberately.

What you do deliberately is sow seed in good ground! You sow it in those places where you know the seed has a chance not only to germinate and sprout, but to grow up into a healthy plant - one that produces much fruit.

In this parable Jesus teaches that God has a different way of sowing. He sows everywhere and in all places. Not like the Pharisees and the holier-than-thou religious leaders who would keep the seed out of the hands of tax-collectors, adulterers and various assorted kind of sinners!

The incredible thing within the parable of “**THE SOWER, THE SEED, AND THE SOIL**” the thing which is both **offensive** to those who think that they know how things should be done, and **good news** to those who have ears to hear Jesus’ message:

“is the liberality of the sower of the seed and the abundance of the harvest that is produced - a harvest that far exceeds what could be reasonably expected even if all the seed landed in good soil.

Those who have ears, let them hear.

The **seed** in the parable is the **Word of God**, it is the Good News of God's kingdom. The **sower** is **God**. The **soil** is the **Hearer** – like you and I.

But the **Seed** is also the One who first tells us this parable, the seed is **Christ Jesus** himself - who - as the scriptures tell us over and over again - came from God that we might have life and have it abundantly the **seed** is the one who is the **Living Word** - the **Word made flesh** - who came into this world while we were yet enemies of God - and gave his life for us so that we might turn to God and live as God's beloved children in a world - and a heaven - made new.

The **Seed** is the one who tells us to do things like to:

- go out into the world and make disciples of all nations;
- love our enemies;
- pray for those who oppress us; and
- bless those who curse us.

The **Seed** is the one who accepts us and who wants to be planted deep in our hearts and to grow in our lives even we are unworthy to even dare to approach him and to ask him for his hope - his love - his strength - his joy.

While there may be a limit to what we can do in sowing the word:

- a limit to the energy and the love that we have for one another; and
- a limit of financial and people resources that might cause us to keep sowing in our own backyard, but never venturing out.

**BUT THERE IS NO LIMIT TO WHAT GOD CAN DO AND WHAT GOD DOES DO!**

**There is no limit to what we can do when God's word is in us, directing our lives, working through us, growing in us as God wants it to do.**

***"Those who have ears", says Jesus, "let them hear."***

Let them hear that **God is pouring out his love** in abundance upon this world and that at the end there will be an incredible harvest!

Let them hear too that **we should not hoard the seed** that God has given to us to sow;

Let them hear that **God's purposes will not be frustrated** if we sow some here and there,

Let them hear that the word of God's love and care that we manifest in our **actions** and our **attitudes** and the **words** we speak will **not be lost if we give it freely** to the those who may allow it to be snatched away, or choked out, or to wither away it won't be lost because the harvest that will come from all our acts of sowing the good news of Jesus Christ will be more, much more, than anyone can expect.

**"As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth"** said God through the prophet Isaiah in the first reading today.

**"My word will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."**

The purpose of God is the renewal of our lives - and of the life of the world.

**"You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace"**, says God to his people Israel - and to us today.

**"the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. Instead of the thornbush will grow the pine tree, and instead of briars the myrtle will grow. This will be for the LORD's renown, for an everlasting sign, which will not be destroyed."**

God's purpose is accomplished by God's word - the word that created heaven and earth and which has been made flesh in Christ Jesus our Lord so that the sick might be healed, the captive set free, the poor receive good news - and the dead restored to life.

It is going to happen - and we can be part of it - or not - as we choose.

But we who have received the Word of God.

We, who have been joined to Christ in Holy Baptism and have been gifted with the Holy Spirit, and blessed with the riches of his grace, let us be generously indiscriminate in how we share the Good News, in how we sow God's redeeming love all over the place.

**They who have ears - let them hear - day by day, now and forever.**

**Amen.**

**The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.**

Sermon by Pastor John Simboras

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