

Have you noticed that this is called the Parable of the Sower, but when we talk about it, reflect on it, we think of it as the parable of the seeds, or even more so, the parable of the dirt? We hear this interpretation some time later that Jesus gave to his disciples. But, what if it really IS about the Sower? What if the dirt is the secondary point, not the primary? What if the parable were about God and God's actions, and then secondarily about us and our reactions? That's the way it's been from the first seed every sown – In the beginning, God acts; only then can, and does, creation and God's children REACT.

But if the parable IS about God, then what does the parable mean? Only those who have ears to hear will ever listen closely enough to try to understand.

Jesus begins: The Sower goes out one day to begin his work. He seems to be absentminded, careless, disorganized, letting seeds fall randomly. But really the Sower is focused, strategic, working with great care. The Sower scatters seeds abundantly, persistently, not concerned about some falling in what seem to be unfruitful places, because He knows some will fall in very fruitful places. And who knows? Along the way, some thorns may get uprooted, some rocks may be moved, there may be a place in the hardened path where a seed digs in and pushes up through a small crevice.

So for the Sower, it's worth the risk of scattering seeds everywhere, even where it is unlikely that they will take root and produce fruit, because maybe, just maybe, they will.

And that's the way God is – scattering grace and truth all around. Doing so abundantly, persistently, thoroughly with carefree abandon, ready to rejoice when that one seed – that one seed of heaven makes its way into our hearts, takes root and grows in us, so that we can produce the fruit of God's grace and truth in our lives. Think about some of those words in scripture that become seeds of grace and truth that take root in our lives:

- “Love the Lord your God with all you heart, soul, mind and strength, and your neighbor as yourself.”
- “Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
- “All things work together for good for those who love God and work according to God's purposes.”
- “I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.”
- “What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God?”
- “Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.”
- “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.”
- “I will be with you always even to the end of the age.”

- “Christ died for you while we were yet sinners; that proves God’s love toward us.”
- “Anyone who wants to be my disciple must take up their cross and follow me.”
- “The Spirit helps us in our weakness.”
- “Whoever does it for the most vulnerable of my brothers and sisters has done it for me.”
- “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen.”

And the seeds scatter on...

The Divine Sower continues this work, always and everywhere, in all people, at various places in their lives, various depths of faith or understanding, knowing that many seeds won’t go anywhere, but also confident that every now and then one will... The Divine Sower understands us and how life can be.

As we know, in the parable, various kinds of dirt are described, and if we were to compare ourselves with that dirt, the truth is that we can be described as all of them.

- There are times when we are like the path, hardened by life circumstances, or feeling trampled on. We are sometimes closed minded, resistant to truth we need to hear.
- There are other times when we are like rocky ground, when our relationship with God is purely emotional, with little substance or depth. It is a relationship of convenience – when it’s easy or comfortable for us – a belief in God without a commitment to God. It’s that “cheap grace” I was talking about a couple weeks ago.
- And who doesn’t deal with distractions! When there are so many things vying for our attention that we lose our priorities. When the thorns of our worries can truly feel like we’re being choked, and as they get a hold of us, it is really hard to break free without strong faith and reliance on God.
- Yes, it is possible for all of those to hold true for us, but it is also true that we can be good soil! When our hearts and lives are well prepared, tended to by prayer, cultivated by reading scripture daily, nourished by worship... that when a seed of truth lands, it takes root, reveals something new about God, about ourselves, and we are motivated to live by that truth, to rely on God’s grace, to respond to God’s challenge or comfort, to grow as disciples in faith and action, and truly be productive for God.

This is our hope and our goal, yet still we know that we are sometimes shallow, sometimes hardened, sometimes distracted, and sometimes productive. But even

though we change, our circumstances change, our level of faith changes, we can be sure that God remains the same. God's grace doesn't change. God's faithfulness endures forever. God's promises take various forms, but they can always be trusted. God's Word is communicated in different ways to different people in different times, but it doesn't change. God's kingdom is obvious and mysterious, but it is always present.

The good news is that the Divine Sower keeps scattering seeds of grace that can loosen up beaten down soil. He keeps scattering seeds of truth that are strong enough to pull up and choke out weeds, and persistent enough to crawl between rocks & grow up through the crevices. He keeps scattering the seeds of heaven which fertilize and nourish the soil, as roots grow deep and produce much fruit.

Let those with ears, listen!