

“The Sower” August 2020

Jeremiah 8: 18- 9:1 and Matthew 13: 1-23

Let us Pray: Heavenly Father, may the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be pleasing to you. Amen.

You've been hearing a lot of parables from me.

I like parables! We can relate to them even though these teachings of Jesus are almost 2,000 years old!

The parable of the sower that Tom just read in this mornings lesson, is one of my favorites!

It's very popular and well known and it's easy to understand.

In the parable of the sower, Jesus actually explains it in detail and makes it crystal clear to the disciples the moral of the story.

The parable of the sower has been preached by every minister...
every Sunday school teacher....

Books have been written about this parable!

And all speak with one voice in regard to the explanation!

The interpretation revolves around the different soils-
and how they refer to the heart of various types of people.

Right?

The hard soil, or the path –the seeds are eaten by birds

The rocky soil shallow roots and they wither and die.

The thorny soil chokes out the plants.

But the fertile soil grow and yield 30, 60, 100 fold!

(Pause) We are all aware, that the seed, is the word of God.

(Pause) This is a very clever parable,

The soil represents a variety of people and their heart...

how they received (or didn't receive) the Word of God.

(Pause) My most vivid recollection of this parable,

Is from the play and movie “Godspell”.

Have you seen that?

Growing up in the 70's was a treat in itself,

But growing up in the 70's with a hippy-wanna-be Mother
and a Father who was ordained,

I was subject to MULTIPLE viewings of Godspell!

On stage, in churches, and in the movie theatre, on VHS, etc.

And don't get me wrong, I liked the play & movie...

And have strong memories of the parables acted out.

Do you remember the parable of the sower?

EXPLANATION or YouTube Clip

Explanation:

So for those of you who may not know “Godspell” is a musical production

that is structured as a series of parables,
primarily based on the Gospel of Matthew.

The parables are interspersed with music set primarily to lyrics from traditional hymns, with the passion of Christ appearing briefly near the end of the show.

And the parable of the sower is acted out by the disciples.

Its very dramatic and was entertaining to me growing up.

My point here is the message of the Sower parable is crystal clear, we all concur, even Hollywood does.

(Pause) Now when everybody and everything is in agreement, Something in my brain trips to question it.

I can't help it. Something seems amiss.

So, I ask myself: "What is the most important component?"

My answer is the seed...and not the soil.

Then I ask: "Who is the most main character?"

Well that's pretty easy, there is only one right?-

The sower! Although I did consider the birds!

So in my interpretation, the primary elements are:

The seed and the sower.

Without these, there is no parable.

The types of soil are inconsequential.

They don't matter.

(Pause) Jesus emphasizes the RESULTS of sowing the seed.

(Pause) I believe, that here lies the genius of this story!

(Pause) You see, my emphasis this morning is the seed and the sower.

Without the seed and the sower;

there are no seeds to fall anywhere.

With this "first cause" emphasis, the message of the parable is:

WE NEED TO BE SOWERS!

We need to get out and sow the seed.

We need to spread the Word of God.

We need to PLANT, the little mustard seed.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations!"

Matthew Chapter 28, verse 19.

As disciples, as Christians, as members of the Church;

We need to be sowing the Good seed...

Because there's plenty of bad seed!

We need to plant the seed of God's commandments,

His eternal Kingdom...His salvation...His power & glory

We need to sow the seeds proclaiming we are God's children.

The problem I see with placing emphasis on the soil;

is, we can neglect the planting...we ignore the sowing.

Our time is devoted to analyzing the soil...analyzing the people.

Analyzing the heart of another person

And we endlessly conclude:

“Well, nothing’s going to grow there, so what’s the use?”

“It’s not worth the effort to sow seeds here in Schuylkill County”

“Wow, look at that poor soil over there”

“Look at those rocks! Look at those thorns...nothing will grow there.”

We can’t get beyond scrutinizing the soil...analyzing the people!

We can’t judge the heart of another!

My simple message this morning is FORGET THE SOIL!

JUST SOW!

(Pause) It’s exactly what the sower does in the parable.

(Pause) this is the teaching of Jesus, not me.

The Sower doesn’t seem selective, does he?

He devotes no time to analyzing the soil;

or examining its condition... He just broadcasts the seeds!

(Pause) So here is our task.

We need to identify with the humble, nameless sower.

There is no fanfare or carnival here...

He just humbly sows seeds.

And YES, some of our seed will fall on rotten ground!

Some seed will never grow...

Some seed will never mature...

Some seed will never yield anything.

But nothing...nothing...NOTHING-

will grow if we don't sow!

The problem of poor soil is not our problem!

Let me re-phrase that:

The problem of poor soil, is a problem out of our control.

Prophets in the Bible had the same problem,_

Jesus, had the same problem.

In our Gospel lesson, Jesus quotes Isaiah:

“You will indeed listen, but never understand, and you will indeed look, but never perceive.”

Prophets couldn't fix poor soil...

Jesus couldn't solve it...

I don't believe we can either.

(Pause) Our role is simple...take the seed bag...AND SOW!

So where do we sow this seed?

Where do we spread this Word of God?

EVEYWHERE!!!

In our neighborhood....at work...on Facebook...on twitter....

at the gym...the grocery store...with friends...

on the telephone...on zoom....everywhere!

Don't make it complicated:

Don't worry about the soil...

Don't worry about wasting the seed,

don't be stingy or conservative with the seed,

We have an unlimited supply and they're free!

Don't worry about the season or time of year,

We can sow anytime!

Don't worry about the weather or phases of the moon;

JUST SOW!

Sow to your children, your grandchildren, your parents, your neighbors,

Sow to strangers and co-workers!

Sow the seeds of God's word!

Sow the seeds of your faith

Sow the seeds of your Christian belief.

(Pause) Without you...nothing is going to grow.

Without you...nothing will blossom or bloom.

Without you, there will be no harvest...no yield;

No church...No St. Johns...

(Pause) Can you imagine the world?

Plant life this week!

Invite people to Church!

Sow the seeds of hope...eternity and love!

God's Word...the seed... does no good if it remains in the packet!

Amen.