

God Is Hard at Work Sowing Seed

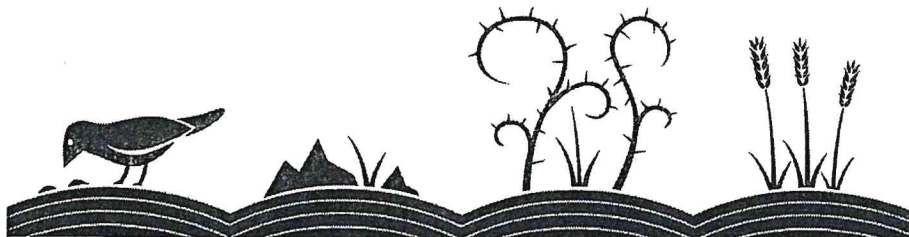
The parable of the sower and the seed

- Today J, prbl. Prbl: stry re earthly actvty we can relate to, teaches deeper hvnly truth. Today: stry of farmer, into field, sow/plant seed. I bet: earthly actvty many can relate to. Hands: ever grew up/worked on farm that grew crops; I. Or, planted seed any kind (grass, flower, veg); I, grass, spring. We can relate; pic we can undrstnd: farmer, field, sowing seed. In story, 4 diff types soil seed lands on: footpath, stepped on, birds. Rocky, thin dirt, nowhere for roots go; can't sink. Thorns, thistles, weeds that grow/choke it. Good fertile soil, rich black dirt where plants grow. You can relate: if you're going to grow plants, need good soil; if don't, won't grow.
- But there's deeper hvnly truth J teaching here – bec not like J giving us advice on how grow garden. Point of prbl, hvnly truth: God growing faith. That's crop he wants grow w/this seed he's sowing. So w/this prbl, J teaching us: how faith grows, and how God (like farmer in field) is hard at work sowing seed.



Four soil types

- Mt 13; also in Mk, Lk. From all 3, we know: sower, God; field, world filled w/souls; seed, Word, Gos; crop seed grows, faith; 4 diff soil types, 4 ways GW received by ppl.
- Let's start w/last first; at end prbl: **vs. 23a**. Soil God wants, bec where seed will grow. This is Xian heart that hears/bels Gos, clings to J in faith. Now, if stop there, say, "Good! I'm Xian; I come chrch; (I watch services online); I've got faith; I'm pretty good soil, then we'd be missing point. **Vs. 9**. In this prbl, J issues very strong warning, to all us, not to receive seed of Gos like other three soil types.
- 1st, **vs. 19**. These: ppl who hear GW, but never apply thmslvs; never sinks in. Goes in one ear, out other. Like seed sitting on top of ground; never grows, does anything; so birds come, snatch away. These are ppl who hear Word but not really listening. Warning for you! When you come to chrch (tune in online), come to listen? Come listen w/undivided attn to words/Sav, who speaks thru Word re his will for life, plan/salv? I don't think we always do! We let mind wander, lose attn, checking phone, reading Guide, during service – really listening? Devil's birds hovering over us evry day, looking opp swoop down, snatch away seed of Gos, that God's sown on hearts, but we've left sitting up on surface, w/o listening, applying to lives. 1st.
- 2nd, **vs. 20-21**. These ppl who've come faith, love J, Xian – until faith challngd. Ever sat in phlsphy class at seclr unvrsty? Some have. There, Xian faith mocked; our college kids made to feel like idiots for belvng crucfd Jew is Son/God. That will challng faith! Not just on college campus, but this haps evrywhr in seclr society where true Xianity is ridiculed/belittled as religion for uneducated. Warning for you: this world will challng your beliefs, test your faith. Unless your roots are sunk deep down into ground, past rocks on surface, your faith will be in danger of drying up, dying. That's 2nd.
- 3rd, **vs. 22**. I think strngst warning in prbl right here, bec this is all of us! We may think we have strong faith; but we're all surrounded by weeds/thorns/concerns of life. Think of all things in world competing for your attn, taking up your time. Not all are bad! Not bad to: work lots of overtime, make \$ for fam; spend weekends up north, vaca; go to out of town for baseball tourneys or weekend club league v-ball camps; stay busy doing all these actvties that in/of selves aren't wrong. But you've got to constantly evaluate priorities, bec when you let these actvties rise to level above God, become more imp to you than faith in J, then even these good things become thorny weeds that slowly/surely choke out, kill your faith.
- So, clear warning for all Xians here: even if we think have strong faith, we've got birds, rocks, thorns, weeds all around. Unless we clear these out of life, our faith will be in danger of drying up and dying.



Powerful seed!

- But here's good news – and one most imp points of prbl: despite fact we have birds, rocks, thorns, weed all around us, God is still hard at work sowing seed! J started prbl: **vs. 3b**; that's what God's been doing all along, to this very day. God is detrmnd sow his Gos seed all over world. No ordinary seed; powerful seed – Gos, msg of death/res of JC for redmptn entire world! In fact, this seed so pwrfl, can actly change your soil type! Can make bad soil good! Think re that: regular seed doesn't do that! If you plant flower garden, you've got dry clay, not like flower seed going change dry clay into fertile soil. But God's Gos is such powrfl seed, can actly turn bad soil good.
- That's what hapd you! By nature, your heart: dry clay, scorched soil, lifeless dust; nothing could grow there. But when God sowed seed his Word onto your heart, your soil changed; your heart became fertile ground where faith would grow, blossom into beautiful flower. God converted you, baptized you, brought you to faith. That's power of Gos - changes hearts, lives.
- And bears abundant fruit! **Vs. 23b “[It] produces...”** Msg of J: shows you love of God, calls you child of God, takes away guilt, forgives sins, gives strength to get through diffclt days, gives you hope of eternal life in hvn. That's an amazing yield from such small seed.

Acres of faith

- And that's seed God is hard at work sowing. When you look at prbl, sev lessons you can learn. 1) this prbl is warning re birds, rocks, thorns, weeds, temptns, distrctns, concerns of life that constantly surround us, try kill our faith. We need prioritize J in our lives, make him more imp than anything else. 2) this prbl reminds us thank God for sowing his seed on us; he brought us to faith; caused faith to grow withing us; he did that. 3) this prbl makes us want to be the good soil; we want his seed to grow within us; we want hear Gos; we want worship God; we want grow lot of faith; we want be good soil.
- Finly, prbl also gives us glimpse into very heart of God; you get see what God wants! God wants acres of faith! So he does what farmers don't do: sows seed on footpath, rocks, thorns, weeds. Very generous with seed (almost reckless), bec wants huge harvest – that's what's imp to God; what's on his hrt. And knows his powerful seed can turn bad soil good, and can yield amazing harvest of faith in hearts of his ppl. So every day, all over world, with a patience/love that never ends, God (like farmer in field) is hard at work sowing seed. And our prayer: LJ, plant that Gos seed deep within me and within many others, and let it grow into strong/healthy faith.

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. ²Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. ³Then he told them many things in parables, saying: “A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. ⁸Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. ⁹Whoever has ears, let them hear.”

¹⁸“Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: ¹⁹When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. ²⁰The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. ²²The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²³But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”