

Sunday 12th July Trinity 5

Read Matthew 13.1-9, 18-23

Reflection

Ellie Skerratt

Here in the parable of the sower, we see Jesus teaching about the Kingdom of God and the advancement of His Kingdom here on earth. Jesus explains the different outcomes for seeds sown on the four different types of ground, which represent people's responses to how the gospel is received. The seed is the Word of God and the sower is those who proclaim it.

Like many people I didn't grow up in church, but went on special occasions. I didn't grasp or understand the message of the gospel. Aged sixteen, I met someone who shared the good news of Jesus with me, and I was hugely impacted by our conversations and time together, but it wasn't until I was twenty-one that I accepted Jesus into my life. In those five years between me hearing the gospel message and becoming a Christian, my friend faithfully prayed for me, loved me through my many ups and downs, listened to me and journeyed with me through my questioning and doubting. Her words and actions continually displayed and revealed the enormity of God's grace and love for me, to the point where I could no longer deny His existence. She scattered seeds in my life, continued to water them with care and patience, and God in His timing, made Himself known to me.

I share this in the hope that this is of some encouragement to you. What we must realise from this gospel story is that the sower never gave up. My friend scattered seeds in my life over the years and never gave up on me; she reflected to me who Jesus is and over time my heart softened. The soil within me became good and the seeds started to grow - God's word started to take root, deepen and grow within me. We can scatter the seeds and as sowers we must never give up on the ground regardless of its state; hard ground, stony ground or ground full of thorns. We are not responsible for how God's Word and love is received, but we have a responsibility to scatter the seeds and share His love. God wants to use each one of us in our daily lives to be sowers of the seed; through our words, our deeds and in the growing of healthy relationships with others.

We have seen over the recent months people showing extraordinary acts of kindness and sacrifice for others. Many of us as individuals have prayed for, served and cared for others in our community, both through emotional and practical support. Seeds may well have been sown in people's lives during this time. We can sow the seeds, we can continue to water them, but we trust God with the growth. In 1 Corinthians 3:6 Paul writes, "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow."

So why does the sower take the time to scatter the seed on different types of ground that aren't the good soil? Just as a growing seed can crack a rock, so too can the word of God transform hearts and lives. God can do the impossible! We don't know what seeds we may sow in people's lives, or the impact of what we say or do has, but we are all called to be Christ like - to do our best to bring His good news, presence, love, hope and peace to everyone we know and in every situation we find ourselves in. Fertile soil may be found anywhere, even in the most unlikely places.

v23 "The seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop." These people bear fruit and bring people into God's Kingdom. So, what does bearing fruit and being fruitful look like for us? Being carriers of God's presence and exemplifying Jesus to others through our actions and words is one way. As we give the Holy Spirit more control in our lives, He begins to do in and through us what only He can do - to shape us and grow us to be more like Jesus. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control", Galatians 5:22-23. People who display the fruits of the spirit and who are fruitful are so because they receive and live God's word. When we are intimate with Jesus through our worship, prayer life, spending time in His word and in fellowship with Him and others, we become more Christ like and more fruitful.

We are living in strange times - lots of unknowns and uncertainty in our lives and in the months ahead; people are lonely, fearful, grieving the loss of loved ones and the loss of life as we knew it only 4 months ago. People need to hear and know the good news of Jesus! What is our part to play in this? To take the gospel and love of Jesus Christ to all those we know and meet. Let's not get tired or weary of scattering the seed, wherever it may fall and however people's hearts may appear. We play our part and God does the rest. Let's be the hope and light of Jesus our community and world so desperately needs.