

Dolapo Ogunbawo - Sunday July 12, 2020

Reading – Matthew 13: 1-9; 18-23

The Parable of the Sower

All seeds can grow! True or false? This is a question I use many times when I am trying to get teachers to think about the learning process. I am in education and have very little to do with farming or agriculture but I have found that this farming question lends itself to education and learning. If all seeds can grow, then all children can learn. I am sure you won't all agree with me but my argument is that just as all seeds have within them the capacity for growth, all children have the potential to learn. We know that all seeds don't grow e.g., the seed we eat don't even get to be planted and many of us have experiences of planting seeds some of which never come up and some which seem to do well initially then for one reason or another shrivel up and dry out.

Our reading the parable of the sower is a well-known parable Jesus used to tell the story of a sower who went out to sow seeds. We don't need to be professional farmers to know that before planting seeds the soil must be carefully prepared so we are bound to ask what this sower is about who is just flinging seeds about! Many of the people who heard Jesus tell this parable would have come from agricultural backgrounds or at least they would be closer to the food growing culture than we are today. They will know that a sensible farmer does not just fling seeds all over the place. He prepares the ground in advance so that the seeds don't fall on rocky grounds or among thorns. So, what is this parable of Jesus really about?

There are 3 elements to consider.

1. The seed
2. The sower
3. The soil

If we go with the generations of Sunday school lessons, the seed is explained as the word of God. There's no debating that. But this parable is not about the seed which by its very nature is bound to grow or fail depending on where it is put.

God may be the primary sower but as a Christian, those of us who has accepted the commission to join Jesus in spreading the Gospel is a sower too. We are in the business of planting seeds for God – seeds of love in the hearts of people we meet, people in our lives and in our care. God is love and as we sow seeds for him we must ask from time to time, "What steps must I take to bring the seeds of love I sow into the lives of people to flourish and flower?"

Finally, the soil is our hearts where God's word is sown. The parable has 4 types of soils.

1. The path – failed to grow because the birds ate the seeds is interpreted as failure to understand God's message.
2. Rocky ground – has no root so endures for a short time and falls away explained as quickly forgetting God's messages.
3. Among thorns – choked by worldly matters so it is not productive
4. Good soil – hears God's word, understands, puts it into action and bears fruit.

These 4 types of soil represent different responses to God's message. I believe that God speaks to everyone – those who know him and those who don't. We respond differently because we are in different states of readiness. God's message come to us in a variety of ways – when we listen to sermons, hear or sing hymns and worship songs, read our Bibles, reflect on nature or observe life etc. Whichever way God message comes to us, it is important that we consider how God's word takes root in our lives by asking the question, "What kind of soil am I?"

This morning, as we consider that question, "What kind of soil am I?" let us pray for God to give us hearts that will hear, understand and do his will to the glory of his name. Amen.