

Luke chapter 8:1-8

After this, Jesus travelled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, ² and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; ³ Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.

⁴ While a large crowd was gathering and people were coming to Jesus from town after town, he told this parable: ⁵ "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds ate it up. ⁶ Some fell on rocky ground, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. ⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown." When he said this, he called out, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."

Introduction

It's harvest and we are thankful for all the good things we are able to enjoy and share with others.

I've noticed that most times Jesus speaks about harvest, or farmers, or growing or seeds it's to make a spiritual point and we shall seek to be open to what Jesus might say to us today with a harvest theme.

The person that you are right now is as a result of all that has been "sown" into your life. Seeds of all sorts will come every day.

What do I mean??? Little seeds and some that grew very large

The habit I have of suddenly singing some nonsense words to a popular show tune...that's from my Dad, no question, but that's just a small thing.

The night I spent alone in a mission hall listening to God was the beginning of my vocation to ministry...that has shaped my whole life and that of my family. Huge impact!

You get the idea. Some seeds you have planted deliberately. Others just fell in by themselves. Some seeds were planted by others. Some are small things. Others shape your whole life.

Bitter or Sweet.

Here we have some herbs and plants – different flavours. Who will try some? What are they like?

Some are...

Sweet
Flavoursome
Bitter
Unusual

Think of yourself as a harvest of all the seeds that were planted in you.

Have a conversation with each other or if you like just mull this one over (those of you watching at home can chat or be mulling over)

- Something good, really good in your life. When and how was that planted?

- Something growing now – what has God planted in your life and is growing?
- What do you regard as a weed in your life that is bitter to the taste? How and when did that happen. When was that seed sown?

Talk

It's used to be called the parable of the sower. The parable of the seed. It's really the parable of the soil.

The usual sermon is to encourage us to be the good soil that hears the word, receives the word, lets it sink in and it grows bringing a valuable harvest... have you all heard that sermon in the past???

But let's turn this one on its head because in truth we are rarely ever just one of the four soils. That might even be to our advantage.

In Jesus parable he had one clear idea. The seed was good seed and he was explaining how it might fail. The seed was the word of God and you definitely want that to be landing in the right place and taking root.

But as we've been discussing, all manner of seeds are sown our way every moment of every day and all have the potential to have an impact on us.

First of all – think of those things that are negative. Weeds of negativity, destruction and harmful to us. Wouldn't it be better if they fell on a hard surface and were trampled?

Last week Jane reminded us of the story of Adam and Eve and the serpent, questioning God and sowing doubt, misleading them away from God.

Each of us have vulnerabilities, where something said or done can so easily take root that harms and hurts.

By God's loving grace and healing, usually slow and patient and over a long time, we can overcome and even become weed resistant!

Sometimes seeds come our way that grab our attention but are not what God wants. It's better if they fall on thin ground where they are starved and quickly perish.

I wonder if we as a church have just had that experience. The Diocese encouraged us to apply for a grant from the lottery saying that attitudes and parameters had changed.

We quickly responded and made the initial enquiry, but that seed has gone into very shallow soil, no sooner sprouted than gone. It's better that it has in that we are not now going to devote endless hours on an application that will get us no further forward. Our response needs to be – thanks be to God...but what about you?

Perhaps a regular prayer for all of us needs to be, Lord let what is distracting fall in shallow soil and quickly become nothing.

In Jesus parable he talks of good seed falling on good soil but then the weeds (cares of the world) choke the plant growing.

I want to change that part of the parable.

There might be fine seeming seeds (new opportunities, new responsibilities) really good things...but that's not where God wants us right now. We need to allow what God is growing to carry on growing.

For example, if I ask you to think about being a school governor, or PCC member, or a church warden, or a musician or any of those GOOD things...God might be saying what I want for you right now is what you are doing right now not these new things.

We can be guilty of trying to plant too much in too small a space so that nothing grows well. Perhaps this morning God is saying for you to give your full attention to what he wants for you.

Finally there is the good seed of good things that God wants for us and we need to be prepared to receive and let it grow.

That might mean it's time to clear some space!

You are a harvest of all that has been sown into your life. Good things, growing things, weeds.

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