

July 12th, 2020

Isaiah 55: 10-13; Psalm 65: 1-13; Romans 8: 1-11;

Matthew 13: 1-9, 18-23

After Pentecost, 6a

Is our gospel about the sower, the seeds, or the soil, or all three? I bet if we canvassed different churches this morning, we would hear someone preaching about the sower, someone preaching about the seeds and someone preaching about the soil. Hopefully, no one is preaching on all three, but I can imagine someone is. Not happening here, however.

After reading several commentaries, all about different aspects of the gospel, the one that meant the most to me, and hopefully to you, was one I read of a true account of a pastor and how he related that account to the seeds. That pastor is David Miller who is senior pastor at St. Timothy Lutheran Church, Naperville, Illinois.

Pastor Miller wrote that actually in every moment of everyday, our words and actions sow seeds of one kind or another into the lives of others, and the soil of our lives receives the seeds others cast *our* way. Some seeds grow. Some don't.

Parents and grandparents plant seeds of grace in the lives of children. Teachers sow seeds into their students. Every Sunday school and confirmation teacher sows seeds, often wondering: Does it make a difference? Wondering if the seed will take root in the souls of the children and teenagers, so they know how precious they are to God, and conversely, how much love they have to give because of God's love for them?

People who go on mission trips often wonder if they made a difference. Will the seeds that were sown produce any lasting change, or will the seeds blow away, lost and forgotten. Pastor Miller writes that he wondered this same thing as he got ready to lead a recent prayer service with a motorcycle gang, that is, will the seeds produce lasting change or will they blow away, lost and forgotten.

Pastor Miller writes how seventy motorcyclists and friends gathered around two deep gashes in the turf where one of their members crashed trying to escape the police. He was gravely injured, in fact, disabled for life. Pastor Miller was invited to reflect with the injured man's fellow motorcyclists and to lead them in prayers. In other words, pastor writes, he felt he was there to sow seeds of hope and God's compassion.

Pastor Miller goes on to write that while he was there, how it was a joy and a surprise how his assumptions and lack of faith were exposed. He wrote he went with low expectations, because it was a “motorcycle gang” but soon saw that the seeds of God’s kingdom had already been planted in the lives of this heavily tattooed “congregation”. He said it became evident that someone, somewhere, had already been sowing seeds in these men and women’s lives, way before he showed up. Seeds of God’s compassion and mercy had taken deep root in them.

Under a Sunday sun and the watchful eyes of the local police, Pastor Miller said a communion of care appeared as they hugged, signed a huge card, and humbled their heads in prayer.

“Thank you” Pastor Miller thought. “Thank you for all who planted seeds of grace in these lives. Thank you to the sower who casts seeds of the kingdom into the tail winds of Harley Davidsons.” Pastor wrote that you just never know where the seeds of God’s loving kingdom and grace will find receptive soil. Sometimes it happens, in what we consider, the most unlikely places.

So, this story tells me, that you and I are to be generous with the seeds of God’s Kingdom. Throw the seeds of God’s grace, mercy and compassion everywhere. As the sower in our gospel did not, let us not

make judgments about the quality of the soil. We just never know where the seed will grow. How many times have we seen plants growing out of cracks in the asphalt or on a trodden path? The seeds that are picked up by birds, do not stay in the birds, as we know. Sometimes we have flowers growing because of the birds. And the seeds sowed in the thorns and vines are not always lost. Several years ago I planted a wildflower and herb garden. It grew year after year. Then several summers ago, I decided to mow it all down. This year I thought, wonder if those flowers are still there? Sure enough, I let the garden grow. At first there were weeds and vines. Now, however, although still weedy, the garden is thriving, a rose bush I mowed down to its roots is putting out roses galore. The bright yellow cone flowers are pushing past and ignoring the Virginia Creeper that is trying to take over. And there is the Golden Rod, a weed, but one of my favorites, growing taller than I am, ready to flower so the bees can cover their legs in its pollen. In our gospel, God is telling us to throw out the seeds, regardless of the soil. Throw the seeds of God's kingdom everywhere.

Throw out the seeds, regardless of the soil, regardless to whom or what or where. Throw out the seeds of God's kingdom, the kingdom of God's love, God's compassion and God's mercy. Throw out the seeds of God's kingdom everywhere and to everyone. Amen, Pastor Scales