

Scattered Seed

With Bishop Ronald K. Powell

[John 12:23-24](#) Easy-to-Read Version (ERV)

²³ Jesus said to them, “The time has come for the Son of Man to receive his glory. ²⁴ It is a fact that a grain of wheat must fall to the ground and die before it can grow and produce much more wheat. If it never dies, it will never be more than a single seed.

[John 15:7-9](#) Easy-to-Read Version (ERV)

⁷ Stay joined together with me, and follow my teachings. If you do this, you can ask for anything you want, and it will be given to you. ⁸ Show that you are my followers by producing much fruit. This will bring honor to my Father. ⁹ “I have loved you as the Father has loved me. Now continue in my love.

The Experience

As a child I would often be told by my parents that I had to do gardening in our Back yard. I was anything but interested. Playing in the dirt was one thing, but gardening was not on my list of fun things to do. So, I opted for playing with the water hose and watching cartoons. I had no interest in seeds. Besides, everything I ever planted seemed to die. Luckily, Jesus has a different perspective.

“A farmer went out to sow his seed,” Jesus began to speak from the boat, His audience so thick that He had to teach out in the water. The people sat around the shore and listened intently, immediately seeing themselves in the story—farming was familiar. Their hands had roughened from field labor. Their shoulders could identify with the weight of the bags carrying seed.

Jesus continued, “As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seeds fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where they produced a crop” ([Matthew 13:3-8, NIV](#)).

I can imagine that those listening were empathetic with the farmer who had lost his seeds to birds, heat, and weeds. But I also wonder if they questioned the farmer’s gardening skills. This farmer did not seem to be intentional about where he was throwing his precious seeds.

Maybe he should have inspected the fields better. Maybe he should have buried the seeds deeper. His methods may have seemed unorthodox, but this story may have a missed meaning for us.

In this parable we usually like to take the role of the sower.

We like to be the ones sprinkling seeds of gospel, spreading Christ throughout the unpredictable soil of the world. We like to be the farmer. But what if we aren’t? What if we aren’t the ones in control of spreading the seed, but instead we are the seeds—people being spread by God, the heavenly farmer, across various circumstances with the expectation for us to grow where we are.

Like the seeds, we may find ourselves scattered in hard situations, questioning the farmer’s planting skills. I can’t tell you how many times I’ve cried out to God, asking, “What are you doing with me?”

From our limited ground perspective, the world may seem like rocky, weed-infested soil. Yet, with what looks like unorthodox methods to us, there is a skilled and patient farmer scattering us exactly where He needs us.

God wants us to produce fruit wherever we are.

However, if we have not allowed ourselves to be rooted in Christ, (Die to Self) our spirits can wither under the heat of the scorching sun of our trials. The thorns and weeds of bills, relationships, balancing life, and demanding jobs threaten to choke out the fruit of the spirit budding inside.

Often, we want character growth and development, but not at the cost of self-sacrifice or discomfort. Christ's Object Lessons says this:

1-“The life must be cast into the furrow of the world’s need. Self-love, self-interest must perish. But the law of self-sacrifice is the law of self-preservation.”

2- We may look at our situations and ask, “Why was I planted here?” However, Jesus wants us to grow where we are scattered. He promises that the seeds He sows will not be in vain, but will grow and flourish in peace.

Isaiah 55:10-13 Easy-to-Read Version (ERV)

¹⁰ “Rain and snow fall from the sky
and don’t return until they have watered the ground.
Then the ground causes the plants to sprout and grow,
and they produce seeds for the farmer and food for people to eat.

¹¹ In the same way, my words leave my mouth,
and they don’t come back without results.
My words make the things happen that I want to happen.
They succeed in doing what I send them to do.

¹² “So you will go out from there with joy.
You will be led out in peace.
When you come to the mountains and hills, they will begin singing.
All the trees in the fields will clap their hands.

¹³ Large cypress trees will grow where there were thorn bushes.
Myrtle trees will grow where there were weeds.
All this will happen to make the Lord known,
to be a permanent reminder of his goodness and power.”

Maybe, like the parable, birds have come and snatched a seed from your life.

You may have lost a loved one to violence, cancer, or tragedy. History has cast us into many difficult furrows. Although we have found ourselves scattered among the gravel of slavery, buried under poverty, and choked out by injustice, we have the option to change our perspective.

A perspective modeled after the life of Jesus.

There is hope. The Master farmer wants to do something in you, where you are. We can be like the seeds in the parable that were eaten, burned, and buried, or we can choose to be like Christ who grew where He was planted, dying to self and dying for us, under the worst conditions.

Ripe & Ready

Historically, societies don't reach their full technological, economic, and political potential until after they first master the art of sowing and reaping crops.

Likewise, we don't develop full spiritual potential until connecting with Jesus to reap spiritual fruit.

[John 15:5](#) Easy-to-Read Version (ERV)

⁵ "I am the vine, and you are the branches. If you stay joined to me, and I to you, you will produce plenty of fruit. But separated from me you won't be able to do anything.

That fruit includes knowing God, obeying His commands, and having a loving and good character.

[Matthew 7:15-27](#) Easy-to-Read Version (ERV)

What People Do, Shows What They Are!

¹⁵ "Be careful of false prophets. They come to you and look gentle like sheep. But they are really dangerous like wolves. ¹⁶ You will know these people because of what they do. Good things don't come from people who are bad, just as grapes don't come from thorn bushes, and figs don't come from thorny weeds. ¹⁷ In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, and bad trees produce bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot produce good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ You will know these false people by what they do.^[a]

²¹ "Not everyone who calls me Lord will enter God's kingdom. The only people who will enter are those who do what my Father in heaven wants. ²² On that last Day many will call me Lord. They will say, 'Lord, Lord, by the power of your name we spoke for God. And by your name we forced out demons and did many miracles.' ²³ Then I will tell those people clearly, 'Get away from me, you people who do wrong. I never knew you.'

Two Kinds of People

²⁴ "Whoever hears these teachings of mine and obeys them is like a wise man who built his house on rock. ²⁵ It rained hard, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house. But it did not fall because it was built on rock.

²⁶ "Whoever hears these teachings of mine and does not obey them is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ It rained hard, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house. And it fell with a loud crash."

[Galatians 5:22-23](#) Easy-to-Read Version (ERV)

²² But the fruit that the Spirit produces in a person's life is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these kinds of things.

[Ephesians 5:9](#) Easy-to-Read Version (ERV)

⁹ This light produces every kind of goodness, right living, and truth.

As an adult I have come to respect gardening skills and ability to grow things in various types of soil. And now, I have a deeper respect for gardens, and God the sower, who scatters seeds and patiently waits for the results in our lives.

God can, and will, do incredible things in our lives if we would submit ourselves to grow where we are scattered.

RESPONSE

- **What kinds of situations cause you to feel discouraged? How do you usually respond?**
- **When you're feeling down, where is your focus? How would focusing on the Lord change your response to discouragement?**
- **Who in your life has been an example of perseverance through hardship? For whom are you setting an example?**