

Sowing Good Seed Matthew 13

Introduction

- Last week we began our series, “Bloom Where You are Planted”, with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.
- It was a perfect picture. God created everything out of his love. All creation was in perfect harmony.
- All it took was one decision to shatter the perfect picture. Adam and Eve’s desire to want more than what God had provided, came with consequences. They were banished from the Garden of Eden. They became laborers outside of the Garden of Eden, and sin’s dominion over humanity grew out of control.
- Despite the perfect picture being shattered, God still provided the opportunity for Adam and Eve to “Bloom Where They Were Planted.”
- The opportunity provided for Adam and Eve outside of the Garden of Eden provides us with hope that we too can “Bloom Where We Are Planted” despite our circumstances.
- Jesus provided an even greater hope for us through his death and resurrection on the cross. It paved the way for the perfect picture to come back into focus, this time seen through the Kingdom of Heaven.
- Matthew 13
 - Jesus used a parable to explain the picture of the Kingdom God of Heaven.
 - As Adam and Eve were portrayed as farmers, Jesus also uses the example of sowing seed to explain how his Kingdom can take root in our lives, so that we can “Bloom Where We Are Planted.”

Tend to the Weeds in Your Garden

- As was illustrated through the skit this morning, Jesus used the example of seeds planted in different kinds of soil to represent how God’s Word can take root in our lives.
- Before we talk more about that example, look at what Jesus says in [Matthew 13:24-26](#)
 - Take notice that the garden consists of more than just good seed, but also weeds
 - As became evident with Adam and Eve, there are weeds in our garden that compete with the good seed.
- At the beginning of spring I picked all of the weeds out of our landscape
 - Bucket
 - Hands and knees
 - Meticulously looking for the weeds
 - Picking each one by hand
- Six weeks later, guess what?
 - I’ve got more weeds to pick!
 - In some cases there are more to pick, because the rain has provided the right environment for the weeds to grow back
 - I have to tend to the weeds in the garden, or else they will take over our landscape.

- Last week, I cautioned you to be aware of the snake in your garden
 - The snake represents temptation
 - But the weeds represent actual sin that we have allowed to take root in our lives
 - If we don't pick the sin out of our life, then it will overtake our ability to bloom!

Don't Become a Lazy Gardener

- The example that Jesus uses of the sower and the seeds is called a *parable*
 - A parable is a real life illustration that makes a spiritual point. It reveals something deeper than what we might be able to perceive on the surface.
 - It is the reason that Jesus says, "The Kingdom of heaven is like..." Jesus used the parable to explain how things function in the Kingdom of Heaven.
- Why does Jesus use parables?
 - **Matthew 13:10&13**
 - Hearing and Listening- Jesus has said it to the crowds in black and white, and yet some still don't get it, so Jesus is using parables to explain his point in a way that others might understand.
 - However, it is not as though the crowds are hearing impaired or that they lack the ability to understand. Jesus quotes Isaiah 6:9-10; **Matthew 13:15**
 - Hearts' have become dull
 - Eyes have closed
- The crowds were not ignorant of the Kingdom of heaven.
 - Most of them had been raised learning about the kingdom of heaven
 - In fact, many of them were anticipating the Kingdom of heaven, the only problem is that they were anticipating it in a much different way than Jesus was describing it.
 - Anytime that Jesus talked about the kingdom of heaven coming through surrender, sacrifice, love, and forgiveness...many in the crowds turned a deaf ear to what Jesus had to say, and their hearts became dull to his message.
 - Weeds began to take root, and the opportunity to Bloom Where they were Planted began to diminish.
- I had an eye opening experience this past week.
 - Article by author Colleen Carrol Campbell who recently wrote, *The Heart of Perfection: How the Saints Taught Me to Trade My Dream of Perfect for God's*
 - Campbell described the "weeds" of perfectionism that had taken root in her life.
 - The weeds were planted by the temptation that she could be perfect if only she could take control of every decision and situation.
 - Despite her best efforts, Campbell discovered what most of us have discovered that no matter how hard we try perfection always alludes us and leaves us empty.
 - For whatever reason, the same weeds of perfectionism had taken root in my life recently. The more I read Campbell's article the more I was drawn into what she had to say.
 - "Over the years, I've learned that slow, incremental progress-the kind we impatient perfectionists hate-can be a blessing. It schools us in humility, keeps us

tethered to prayer, and produces visible fruit as we travel toward more complete surrender. Opening our hearts to the Lord's mercy, even if we can do so only inch-by-inch, allows him to heal those wounds we've covered over with perfectionism and draw us closer to himself and all those we love. That itself is a liberation."¹

- This sounds so obvious, but for whatever reason, there are times that the weeds are too high for us to see the truth. Perfection cannot be reached without God's mercy. To experience God's mercy requires that we surrender our lives, our plans, and our expectations to God. Whatever "perfect" looks like in our mind's eye we have to surrender it to God.
- I needed that "seed" to be planted in my garden. I needed to pull and discard some weeds this week. And allow God's Truth to take root again.
- When do weeds start to grow in our gardens?
 - Is it not when we become lazy, or take our attention from what needs to be tended?
 - And just as those weeds take root in our garden, so they do in our lives as our hearts grow dull, our ears can barely hear, and our eyes begin to shut.
 - Don't become a lazy gardener!
 - Tend to the weeds in your garden
 - Surrender your life, plans, and expectations to God
 - Let God's Truth take root in your heart.
 - Bloom Where You Are Planted

Prepare for An Abundant Harvest

- Jesus separates the disciples from the crowds
 - **Matthew 13:11-12**
 - **Matthew 13:16**
 - **Matthew 13:36**
 - **Matthew 13:51**
- What makes the disciples so different from the crowds?
 - It's not that they understood everything that Jesus said the first time
 - However, it is that they were willing to listen, and they were willing to ask questions to gain greater understanding.
 - Even though Jesus' picture of the kingdom of heaven may have been different from what they were originally taught, there was something about Jesus that they wanted more of.
 - **Matthew 13:57-58**
 - The disciples were not offended by what Jesus had to say.
- How many of us get offended when someone tells us that there is a better way to do something than the way we were taught to do it?
 - Some of us have been taught to sow seeds of comfort

¹ Colleen Carroll Campbell, *The Gospel Calls Us to Perfection, Not Perfectionism*. www.christianitytoday.com
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- Some of us have been taught to sow seeds of convenience
- Some of us have been taught to sow seeds of wealth
- Some of us have been taught to sow seeds of pride
- Some of us have been taught to sow seeds of perfectionism
- Even with the best intentions, some of those seeds have turned out to be weeds in our garden, and they are keeping us from blooming where we are planted.
- If it is an abundance you are looking for Jesus explains how it is possible; [Matthew 13:12](#)
- Many of you know that in order to grow an abundant garden you don't just throw seed down on the ground, but you have to prepare the ground
 - Till the ground
 - Create rows
 - Pick out rocks, thorns, weeds
 - Soften up the soil
- God has seed in abundant supply, but the ground of our heart has to be prepared and ready.
- If you aren't willing to tend to your garden, if you aren't willing to surrender your plans, if you aren't willing to pull some weeds, then you will never bloom where God has planted you.
- [Matthew 13:23](#)

Conclusion

- Are you sowing good seeds in your garden?
- Are you tending to the weeds in your garden, or have you become a lazy gardener?
- Are you prepared for an abundant harvest, or settling for mediocrity?
- Are you blooming where God has planted you?