

Homily Proper 10 2020

- Some of you know I grew up on a farm.
- So, when Jesus uses a parable that has anything to do with seeds, crops, or livestock, it brings back memories from my childhood.
- Each spring when we planted crops, we waited to see how well the seeds would germinate. This was the first sign of how good our crop might turn out to be.
- Things like rainfall and soil type were big factors.
- I can still remember going out with my Dad to look at the fields from the time we planted the seed until we knew if we had the beginnings of a good crop or not.
- So, when I hear Jesus describe what happens to seed that is sown in different soils, I can relate to this.
- It was only after I got to college and even more so today, that I realize that most people do not know where food comes from, so it is difficult for many to relate to the parable.
- We know Jesus was speaking to a rural community, where everyone would have been able to relate to this mental picture.
- However, today, the story is being heard by people that cannot make a connection from something that is unfamiliar to them to a story about the kingdom of God --
- Yet this is how Jesus taught – by using parables. And we can see that they were not always understood, even then,

because Jesus had to provide an explanation to his disciples separate from the crowds.

- Jesus said, "Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart:
 - Jesus is first telling us that understanding and experiencing God's love begins in the heart.
 - It does not begin with the mind.
 - Jesus is also telling us that we do not always hear or understand God's Word in the same way.
 - And some things we will never fully understand and for this we must trust God enough to accept some things on "faith".
- In the parable, the people on the path cannot hear the word of God in a way that allows them to understand and experience God's love. There are too many distractions in the world that are more appealing to their selfishness and ego.
- As for what was sown on rocky ground, these are the people who hear the word and immediately receive it with joy; yet such a person has only a shallow root system (not foundation), and endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away.
 - Jesus knew some of his followers would fall into this camp, so the parable was a warning for them.
 - We probably know people like this – their faith comes and goes with time and what is popular at the time

- We may have experienced this ourselves on our journey thru life. I can relate to this.
- As for what was sown among thorns, these people hear the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields little if anything. It like planting a crop in the middle of weeds.
 - This example hits home for many of us.
 - In reality it is difficult to put God ahead of our own wellbeing or the wellbeing of our family all the time.
 - We try hard only to have the evil one attempt to snatch away our understanding – our faith – and our love for others.
- But as for what was sown on good soil, the people hear the word and understand it, they bear fruit and yield, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."
 - These are the people that become disciples and sowers of seeds.
 - These are the people that help carry the Good News of Christ out to the world.
- Now, if you are like me you are asking what soil type am I in?
- However, this is parable is not you as a believer. It is about you the sower of seeds.
- As sowers of the word of God, we are called to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ, to everyone – not a select few that look and think and believe as we do. We are to take the Word out to the world – yes – even to those on the path, and on rocky ground and in the thorns.

- Yogi Berra, one of my favorite philosophers, once said, when you come to a fork in the road, take one. What he meant by this was that we should have a bias for action, and it may not matter which path you take. Don't just stand there, do something.
- But Paul says it does matter which path we take. We can follow the path lead by the Spirit, or we can follow the path of selfishness and ego.
- And the lure of selfishness and ego is mighty strong – Paul intimates that we are wired this way from birth.
- All of us at some time have been seeds on the path, or on rocky ground or in the thorns on our journey through life. So we know what it is like to be there.
- And you would still be there if it were not for the Love of God. God placed someone in your life that influenced you to be here today. Through that person or persons, you experienced God's Love.
- Many of the people that cannot hear God's word – those that are on the path – where the seed never gets a chance to germinate – respond to the word in the absence of Love (from the mind, not from the heart). They have chosen to see the world as revolving around them (their ego).
- But for those people that have some faith (however little it may be) reality is “how can I do both”? How can I live in both worlds?

- You see as we go through life, we are flawed human beings and we will not always follow the path of a spirit lead life. Looking back, I know this is true for me.
- Our challenge is to constantly pursue a spirit lead life, but we do not always achieve it. Paul acknowledges this in his letter to the Romans.
- But then this reading is not about us and where we are.
- It is about us as sowers of seeds.
- It is important that we understand where people are on their journey – as they will respond differently ranging from outright rejection to a full embrace.
- In our churches we associate with those that are in good soil most of the time and sometimes find themselves in the thorns.
- They respond mostly from the heart – with God’s Love – and sometimes from the mind.
- I dare to say that those of you listening today have experienced God’s Love in your life and respond to others in God’s Love.
- Yet the world today is made up mostly of those people who have no faith or an immature shallow faith. They are folks on the path or in rocky ground.
- It is unlikely that they have experienced God’s Love.
- Our job as disciples of the Gospel, as sowers of seeds, is to continue to reach out to them where they are.

- If they have not experienced God's Love – it is our job to create opportunities for this to happen.
- And when they finally do experience God's Love we can help them grow by giving them more opportunities along the way and hopefully reach the good soil and become sowers of seeds.
- Along the way they will experience the rocky roads and those filled with thorns. For Jesus said that the evil one will come along and try to snatch away what is in the heart.
- I think I have attempted to lead a spirit lead life, and yet my reality is that sometimes I do and other times I fall short of the ideal.
- My challenge, and dare say your challenge, is to be the best you can be where you are.
- We are not failures in the eyes of God if we fall short of the ideal spirit lead life.
- Remember God Loves you unconditionally
- God created us as flawed individuals, so the best we can hope to achieve is to Love God and Love our neighbor in our own way – in the way we were created by God.
- There are times when we will be lead by spirit and we will reach out from our hearts to others.
- And there will be times we respond out of selfishness, and self-centeredness and ego.
- This my friends is our reality.

- However, by Loving God and Loving our neighbor (even those in the thorns and on rocky ground and on the path) our focus shifts from ourselves to others.
- And in that moment, we become an extension of God's Love in the World.