

Learning Together 6th After Pentecost Covid-19 – Roots and Racism

Jesus liked to teach people by telling made-up stories that helped them think about things. These stories are called parables. I wonder if you already know some parables that Jesus told. There's the Parable of the Lost Sheep, the Parable of the Prodigal Son, and the Parable of the House Built on the Rock, just to name a few. Today, I want to tell you the Parable of the Sower – now that is a sower as in someone who plants seeds, not a sewer as in someone who sews clothes. S-O-W, not S-E-W!

The parable goes like this: A sower went out to plant some seeds. And as they sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil. They sprang up quickly, since they weren't buried deep. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

I wonder what Jesus was trying to teach by telling this story? Jesus explained his story a little bit, saying that the seeds represented people listening to stories about God's love. The ones on the path that got eaten up were the people who heard, but didn't understand, so they didn't get to grow. The ones that fell on the rock, heard the story and were happy at first, but stop sharing God's love as soon as they ran into trouble in their lives. The ones that got choked by weeds, heard the story and tried to share God's love, but got distracted by greed and money. The ones who heard the story and kept sharing it were the ones who fell in the good soil and could grow strong roots - roots of faith and hope.

So, that sort of explains the story a little more, but it still doesn't explain everything. With parables, we have to think about things in our lives and decide for ourselves what the story might say to us. I wonder what it says to you? I think about the seeds that did not get to grow and imagine that they wanted to grow into big plants, but because of where they fell, they did not get what they needed to grow the way they were meant to. It wasn't their fault that they fell where they did. The ones that fell in the good soil had a privilege that the other seeds didn't have. They had all the soil and sun they needed to grow big and strong with deep roots to hold them up.

I wonder if what Jesus might have wanted us to learn from this story, is that we need to be careful when we share God's love with other people, that we make sure they have everything they need to grow in God's love. It is hard to understand about love or anything else when your tummy is empty or you don't have clean water to drink. People need to have food water and shelter in order to live. It is also hard to keep sharing God's love when you don't feel safe, maybe because there is war going on where you live, or because some people act like it is okay to hurt you because of the colour of your skin or the way you look – that's called racism.

There are so many things to think about when we listen to a parable! I wonder what other ideas you might have about the Parable of the Sower and what Jesus might want us to learn from it?

My challenge to you this week is to think about people who do not have everything they need to feel safe and loved, and to think about what you might do to help them. Maybe you could make your own walk-a-thon fundraiser by getting friends and family to each promise to donate \$5 to a charity that helps hungry people or refugees if you walk 5 kilometres, and then go and do the walking! Maybe you could write a letter to the Prime Minister asking for clean water on Reserves where many Indigenous people in Canada don't have safe drinking water. Maybe you could learn more about racism and how we can make Canada better for everyone, and then share what you have learned with friends and family. What else can you think of to do?

Say this echo prayer with me:

Holy God...thank you for stories...that make us think....Help us to find ways...of sharing your love...and making sure...that others feel loved...and safe...We pray in Jesus' name...Amen



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