



“Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears, let him hear.” (Matthew 13:8-9)

God of Truth, you sow the seed of your Word with great abandon, generously giving your grace to all the world. Even as we see different responses to that Word, we pray that you would give us the confidence to know that your promise will bear fruit — more than we can imagine. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Introduction

Jesus told a parable of a man who scattered seeds that fell on various types of soil. Because of the conditions, some did not take root and grow, while others produced abundantly. That’s what it is like when God’s Word goes out to create the fruit of faith.

Read: Matthew 13:1-23

On reading these verses, what are some of your initial impressions and questions? What stands out to you?

The Biblical Context

Wherever Jesus went, crowds would follow. Jesus taught the people as they gathered, often using simple picture-stories called parables. Jesus used everyday examples to explain to his disciples the secrets of the Kingdom of God.

Some of the best-known instances of Jesus’ teaching come in what we know as his parables. The term comes from the Greek word *parabolé* (*pah-RAH-bow-lay*), meaning “figure” or “comparison.” Parables make up approximately 35 percent of his teachings.

Some parables are short metaphorical images; others, like this one, are extended stories used to illustrate the nature of God. In this story, Jesus uses the image of a sower spreading seeds as a way to describe his own work in spreading the Word of God to all people. He shows us what it is like to take up this same mission.

Discussion Questions

1. What is a “sower”? What does it mean to “sow” seeds? According to verses 18-23, what deeper meaning does the metaphor of sowing seeds represent in our lives? Who does God get to sow his seeds?
2. In the real world, when people hear God’s Word what are the different kind of results that Jesus says we can expect? List the four examples he gives:
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
 - d)
3. What is a “parable”? Why do you think Jesus used parables to teach and answer people’s questions? What were Jesus’ followers given that the crowds were not (v. 11)?
4. Martin Luther wrote: “God’s kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives us his Holy Spirit, so that by his grace we believe his holy Word and live a godly life now and in eternity.” In what way are we already part of God’s Kingdom by faith in his Word?
5. What does Jesus tell his disciples in verses 16-17? Do you count yourself fortunate to be able to hear and study the Word of God?
6. Read 1 Corinthians 3:4-9. If the growth referred to here is growth in *faith*, how does Jesus’ parable show that God is the true giver of faith?
7. In what ways does God use us as his “tools” to plant and water the seed of his Word? Do we always know what positive effect our faith may have on the faith of others? What is God’s promise to us in all this?