

THE SOWER  
[written in oral form]

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23  
Proper 10/Ordinary 15, Year A

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I think we are all familiar with this parable about the sower.  
We also know that parables are stories. Stories are powerful.  
We can join into the story, and better understand the message, compared to a straight lecture.

Yet, this sower parable is complex and unique.  
This parable is unique because Jesus explains the analogy in great detail.

The parable makes sense, .....yet perplexing.

The explanation is clear, and the meaning is obvious, and that's perplexing, too.

Why would Jesus state the obvious. It is known that seeds in good soil grow well? Typically,  
Jesus surprises us with twists, such as "the last will be first."

So, we should wonder what is the twist / the hook in this one?

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The people in the crowd would know that seeds would do poorly in lousy and hazardous environments.  
They would also be baffled..... because anyone sowing seeds would know that, too.

Seeds are precious. So, why would the sower be so careless?  
Why would the sower recklessly toss seeds on the path, on rocky ground or in the weeds? That  
does not make sense.

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No wonder they had blank stares that prompted Jesus to explain the parable.

Subsequently, the explanation is clear. The different conditions render different results. This is most  
understandable.

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There was a time when I would respond to this parable by thinking,  
"I sure am glad I am part of the good soil." "I get it."  
I understand the Gospel message."

That confidence lead me to Disparagingly dismiss all those who rejected the Good News, as if it was  
their fault.

Oh,.... and I could pompously nod when I observed "Those 'flash in the pan' Christians fade away."

"Ah,..... no wonder".

"They were so zealous, which made me look bad. But, no more."

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"Praise God", I was in the good soil. I was raised in the church by faithful, obedient Christians. I was given every opportunity to grasp God's message. I was fortunate. I was entitled. I could slowly, comfortably ease into the fortunate life.

I was in the good soil.

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Yet,.....why would Jesus say the obvious?  
What was the point? What IS the point?

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I will rephrase this parable.

There was a chemist frantically working in his personal lab.  
Then one day, he achieved his goal. He was certain that he had successfully created a cure for COVID-19.

It was a combination of anti-bodies, and not just a simple vaccine.  
This was great news. The world could be saved.

Yet, in his haste, he had carelessly exposed himself to the live virus.  
He had early symptoms. He took some of his potion, but he did not know if it would work on those already infected.

Because of his age and condition, he feared he would end up isolated in the ICU.

He dare not go out in person, but he needed to get samples delivered to be confirmed and put into mass production. He would give it away. He had the cure,.....and it needed to be delivered.

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He knew a young indigenous girl. He had been paying her to pick up supplies and food for him.  
He called her, and said there is a small package in front of my house.  
There is money in it for you and a box. Please take the box across town to the university. The address was on the box.

He carefully packed just a sample of his creation, and waited for the indigenous girl to arrive.  
Before long she did, and waved to him through the window.

Later that day, he called the university to confirm delivery, and then called the next day. They did not receive his package.

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There are people in the world who do Not understand ...life.  
The indigenous girl did, but she disappeared! She was taken!  
She was.... gone.

The authorities did not understand. They claimed it happens all the time, and that is just the way it is.

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Distraught and his symptoms getting worse, he knew time was running out. He then thought of his neighbour who had been laid off because of the pandemic.

He called his neighbour. He told him he would pay him to make the delivery, and explained what he had.

The neighbour agreed.

However, the neighbour, realizing the great value of what he had in his possession, decided to use it for personal gain.

He called the media, and told them he had a cure for the virus, and would sell it to the highest bidder.

He went to the centre of town.

Cameras and a crowd had gathered.

He held the glass vial above his head, and boldly declared, I have the cure for all humanity. Everyone cheered. Yet, when asked / when the light was on him, he was unable to explain what was in it. He quickly was judged a fraud, and faded away.

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The chemist watched in dismay the spectacle on TV.

He was grossly disappointed in his neighbour, but it was worse than that. He knew that direct sunlight would destroy the medicine.

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So, he pondered how in the world he could get his potion to the university. He needed someone strong and trustworthy.

Then he remembered the man who built his deck.

He recalled long conversations with him, and how noble and insightful he was.

He phoned him, and explained the situation. He said, "I will pay you well, and I will leave money and my car keys in a package by my door."

The chemist said, "Please use my car.

It is a very nice car. It is reliable, and you will enjoy driving it."

In short time, the carpenter rang the door bell to let the chemist know he was there and about to do as instructed. They smiled at each other through the window.

The carpenter was a large, black man.

The chemist thought to himself, "Surely nothing will happen to him. He is strong and trustworthy."

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He headed straight to the university. Being unfamiliar with the car, he failed to notice that he was going 60 in a 50 kilometers/ hour zone.

He was pulled over. The officer's prejudice caused him to be suspicious about why a **big black** man was driving a nice, conservative car.

When asked, the carpenter said that he did not have the car's registration. The police told him to get out of the vehicle.

Remembering the chemist sense of urgency, the carpenter replied with some intensity, "You've got to be kidding!

I am making an important delivery. Please let me go.  
I'll pay the speeding ticket."

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A bag with money..... a secret package.....a Big Black man.... more police cars arrived.

The carpenter fell among the thorns--growing and expanding thorns.  
And, those thorns were choking him.  
They were choking him.

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The chemist was beside himself in grief and shock.  
He still had enough medicine left, but just barely.

Reluctantly, he called a large pharmaceutical company.

They arranged for an armoured truck, with security guards, to pick up his potion.

The cure proved to be effective, and they mass produced it.  
Individual injections sold for a hefty price.  
Those fortunate enough to have the money were received the protective cure.

The poor and the weak struggled without the cure..... for they were NOT in the good soil.

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This parable confronts us with the stark question:  
\*ARE WE CONSUMERS.... OR ...PARTICIPANTS?  
Are we consumers or participants?

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The Seed is God's message of love, grace, peace and justice.  
God is for the weak and the poor. God does justice.

As Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me ...to bring good news to the poor.  
God has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the  
oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

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We are called to be participants! Participants!

Therefore, We Are the Sower.

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As everyone knows, the sower is the farmer/ is the gardener.  
This is the hook in the parable.  
We are the sower,.....and what kind of farmer / gardener would recklessly waste seed?

Gardeners and farmers know how important good soil is, as is good nurturing.

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So, let us deal with the thorns.

Let us clear out the barriers.

Let us work the ground until it is good soil for everyone / for every seed.           And, let us nurture the seed.

We are the fortunate. We have the power because of being in good soil.

Moreover, I think we all know that it is clear that we cannot claim to be with God if we are merely consumers.

We have the power and the position to eradicate the thorns and clear out the barriers.

Much of our social ills are caused by prejudice and racism, and it is systemic. We can change the system because we are the keepers of the system.

Racism starves people. Racism exploits and limits people.

Racism abuses people, and disproportionately puts them in jail.

And, racism kills people violently or by limiting good healthcare.

No doubt,....creating good soil for all / doing God's justice is hard work.....AND ... it may cost us in the process--we will change.

                    To be sure, it takes action, and not just words.

It takes continued, dedicated Action until there is justice for all.

However, we must know that we are Not saviours. We are not rescuers. We just need to dismantle our destructive barriers.

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I do hope we all see a new world coming, and from that vision, we roll up our sleeves and do what it takes to end racism.

And,.....if you do not know what to do, then do the research to find out or at the very least donate to those who are participants in God's way.

We have been entrusted with seeds full of grace, love and peace.

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We are called to be participants. The Spirit of the Lord is upon us!