

PASTOR'S MUSINGS

AUGUST 2017

LAVISH co-SOWERS

Recently, during worship, we explored the parables of the sower told by Jesus (Matthew 13). Together we noted how we were unwitting recipients of God's indiscriminate sowing practices. Though I'm no expert on modern farming practices, I do know from my amateur experience that preparing the soil and being careful where the seeds are placed is considered prudent... plow the ground, remove the large rocks, add fertilizer, till the dirt and fertilizer to mix well and break up large clumps, hoe out rows and individual holes to make mounds, carefully distribute the seed, cover the seed with soil, water...

The sower in Jesus' parable doesn't do these things. He (God) simply reaches into his seed-bag and grabs handful after handful, flinging them generously out across the ground. The seed (God's love, forgiveness, invitation to relationship) is lavishly distributed. The parable identifies four different soils (lives) that receive an abundance of the seed but no judgement is made on whether or not the soil **deserves** to receive it. No thought is apparently given to the appearance of the ground -- looks too rocky or too weedy, or looks to lack nutrients. No, the seed is thrown believing that some will find good soil, take root and produce a harvest.

In truth, we all grapple with the challenges (hardness of heart, shallowness, cares of the world, disease, etc.) of being "good soil" into which the presence and the purpose and the love of God can blossom and produce fruit. Like my lawn at home, sometimes I need to be re-seeded, weeded, aerated and fertilized. God has provided certain "tools" to assist me with this, but still the seed is God's alone to give.

God continually grabs handfuls of His love, acceptance, forgiveness and joy and flings it generously in our direction. The beauty of being the church is that when we receive these gifts and allow them to grow in us we become co-sowers with God in our families, neighborhoods and world. This peace, and joy and purpose we know, others desperately need!

These "seeds" aren't meant to be hoarded. They are meant to germinate and multiply, and then be shared . . . lavishly and indiscriminately . . . without first judging a person's worthiness. We can not pretend to know when someone is ready to receive what God offers. Our task as co-sowers with God is to make that seed

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available while leaving the success of the harvest up to God. We are called to share our experiences with God with whomever God places in our path.

We are doing this. And lives are being impacted in life-giving ways. There are potentially 20-22 folks who are participating in our ministry that have been encouraged to become members of our church family. Help me nurture them. Be hospitable by intentionally building a relationship with them. Invite them to sit with you and introduce them to your friends. Let them know that you value their presence in worship. Ask them to assist you in a particular ministry. Ask them for their ideas about ministry. Learn of their talents, skills and interests and tell them about your's.

Yes, we are co-sowers with God and there is some harvest to be seen. Yet, what if we were even more intentional about scattering the seeds? What if you and I would make a commitment to throw out at least one generous handful each day? I wonder what the harvest would look like then!

~Pastor Todd