

A Sower Went Out to Sow

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[0 : 00] Our Father, we thank you that we can meet here this day and we pray, our Father, that you will open up the word to us that we might realise that we can reach out to other people with your love and with your word. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Please be seated. Well, I was going to show the New Guinea shillings and they got tangled up in the little beads.

But here they are. They have a hole in the centre and they would have made up \$1.30 in those days, but they'd be much more than that today.

And that New Pella New Testament would have cost \$1.30 for the people to buy, but it would have been many people from Australia and other parts of the world who made that New Testament available to the people of New Guinea back there in 1969.

But I'm speaking about the sower. But of course, that is the word of God as well. And during these few months or during this month at Holy Trinity, the four weeks will be on the gospel, on the parables as found in Matthew chapter 13.

[1 : 29] And I'm speaking on the first 23 verses of Matthew chapter 13 on the sower. And here we see that in the previous chapter in Matthew 12, Jesus' preaching had been strongly opposed by the Pharisees and by a large number of the Jewish people.

They were not happy with what Jesus was preaching. They would have much sooner loved him to be preaching about overthrowing the Romans and establishing a kingdom in Jerusalem than he was talking about a personal commitment to God and eventually to Christ.

And so as they greatly opposed him in the first verse, and you've got the scriptures in front of you, I'd ask you to open them up in Matthew chapter 13.

And we see the first verse there says, That same day he'd been preaching, he'd preached in the morning, mostly afternoon. That same day, verse 1, Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea.

The house was just too small. The people were gathering around. They wanted to know more about this man from Galilee. They wanted to know more about this man who was saying that they should have a closer walk with God.

[3 : 08] And as they gathered there in verse 2, it says, Such a large crowd gathered around Jesus that he got into a boat and sat in it while all the people stood on the shore.

And he told them many things in the parables. And that's on your little overall sheet of the message today. And they got into this, or he got into this ship pulpit.

And so that he's doing the same as I'm doing. I can stand up and you can see me. He was in the boat and the people could see what he was doing and saying.

Well, parables were a common form of teaching in Judaism at that time. The Greek term for parable appears 45 times in the Septuagint, the Greek Old Testament.

And a parable is just a long analogy, often cast in the form of a story which is not always understood by the general public.

[4 : 15] And they weren't fully understanding what Jesus was saying. But he was using worldly things to emphasize heavenly things. And so he was bringing these parables out.

The parable of the sower contains a message for the church and each individual today. So this message of 2,000 years ago, it was for them, but it is equally for you and for me.

Jesus made use of the parables to get across the greater lessons of the scripture. And then we come to verse 3.

And it says, listen, a sower, a farmer, went out to sow seeds. Now, I haven't been, I haven't sowed seeds. But many years ago, at the age of 14 and 15, I worked in a market garden of a Saturday

morning.

And there I had to learn to, you know, drive the horse and the single furrow plough and put cabbages and potatoes and all those sort of things in.

[5 : 27] And it was good to see them grow and come into fruit. And that's what Jesus is thinking and speaking about now. Listen, a sower, a farmer, went out to sow.

Let us just pause and see about the sower, the farmer. Christ Jesus is the sower. He is the farmer. Let us look at the verse in, a further down verse in chapter 1337, which will be about three weeks down the track.

They'll bring this one out. The one who sowed the good seed is the son of man. So it's Jesus Christ who he is speaking about. He is speaking about himself.

Jesus the sower came from the realms of glory as the babe of Bethlehem into this sinful world amongst you and me.

Those 2,000 years ago. We've just celebrated that two weeks ago. To die, to live in the world and then to die on the cross of Calvary.

[6 : 32] To pay the price for our sins. This is the sower. This is the farmer. That's reaching out to the people. Jesus encourages and requires other people to help.

And so we don't get off lightly. There's a place for all who teach the truth. And we might say, first of all, for parents.

What an opportunity we have as parents to share the word of God with our children. And you might say, well, our children are grown up now. Well, your grandchildren or even your great-grandchildren.

To see them come to know Jesus Christ as saviour and Lord. We need to be sharing the word with them. And then with teachers, yes.

Special teachers going into our schools and sharing the word of God with the children in the schools. But then we've got pastors too.

[7 : 31] Or ministers. Whatever you might call them. Who need to share the word. Who need to share the word because they know Jesus. But then you could say, well, that goes for the parents.

That goes for the teachers. That goes for the pastors. What about me? Well, it's everyone who loves the Lord. Paul said to Timothy in 1 Timothy 2.

You then, my child. And he's saying this to you now. Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And what you have heard from me through many witnesses.

He says, entrust to faithful people. Who will be able to teach others as well. What he's saying? Teach others that they might teach others.

That they might teach others. That they might teach others. The gospel goes on as we share the word of God with other people. And you and I have those many opportunities of sharing the word of God with other people.

[8 : 35] Well, then let's briefly look at the seed. And as we look at the seed here, we see the word of God. Listen, a sower in verse 3b.

Listen, a sower went out to sow the seed. And as we think of that, Matthew 13.23 says, But the one who receives the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word of God and understands it.

And unless we're hearing the word of God, yes, you're hearing it over Sunday as you come to church. But unless we're reading the word of God daily, we'll never understand fully the word of God.

We need to read it ourselves. The word of God is living and has tremendous vitality. And in Hebrews 4.12, For the word of God is a living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword. It penetrates even to the dividing of the spirit, the joints and the marrow. It judges the thoughts and the attitudes of our heart. It really challenges us, doesn't it?

[9 : 48] The word of God is truth. A verse that you all have heard and know. John 14.6, I am the way, the truth and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me. And the word of God uses the Holy Spirit to produce a new birth. And in Romans 1.16, I'm not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes.

First for the Jew, then for the Gentile. And I'm going to ask Nancy now to come forward and to just give an illustration of something that happened to us a number of years ago and how we can apply

it to us today.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[11 : 35] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. I'm looking that car could in the hoc. However, she didn't want to conform to the rules of the hostel and started going out at night time and not coming in till quite late.

And so we had to let her go because of the bad influence she had on the other girls. We transferred to Broken Hill Hostel in 1963. Mid-year, we received a phone call from the BCA office in Sydney.

[13 : 04] Sue had arrived there from Mungandai on the train all by herself and had got herself into some trouble with the local young people there in Mungandai and wanted to speak to me.

We had already made arrangements for me to go back to Sydney within a couple of weeks to take our next child, Philip, back to the orthopaedic specialist in Sydney.

I arranged to meet her in the Botanic Gardens. There were no McDonald's to go and have a cup of coffee in those days. And then at the BCA office later. And with the assistance of the BCA staff, one of the ladies there, we found accommodation for her and a part-time job.

Sue, by that time, was very open to the gospel. And as I chatted to her in the park with no one else around us, she admitted that she had been listening to the messages years ago but was so stubborn that she didn't want to listen to it.

But that seed was sown then. And as I went back to Broken Hill, when we came down again at Christmas time, once again to visit the orthopaedic specialist and to have a break in Sydney, we had her coming to our home where we were staying.

[14 : 30] And she finally gave her life to Christ. And she became a different girl altogether. She was very open to the gospel at that time. The seed had been sown from her time at the hostel, not just from us, but from the godly matron who was there before us.

She became a regular visitor to our home when we concluded BCA work. And later we gave her her 21st birthday. She blossomed into a lovely young Christian woman.

She went on to go and work at the Dr. Monado's homes in Sydney. And then later moved to New Zealand to become involved in a local church there. We're trying to work out when it actually happened, but we think she went over to work particularly with a church.

And I think it was a uniting church at that stage. But while she was there, she was asked to help a missionary family who had come back from Tonga, where they had three young children and the wife was dying from cancer.

Now that she was a keen Christian, she was able to help that family greatly. Once that wife died, Sue returned to Sydney. To the position of a matron of Dr. Monado's homes.

[15 : 48] But in that time, we had moved from Sydney down to Tasmania. Sometime later, the husband of that lady who died got in touch with Sue.

I think he came across to Sydney to see her and asked her to marry him. And she did. She did. And someone paid my fare for me to go up from, by the time we were here in Melbourne, paid my fare for me to go up to Sydney for the wedding.

And it was lovely to see how she had grown and blossomed as a lovely young Christian woman. He became, that man became the vice principal of Nungalina Aboriginal Bible College in Darwin.

And she was her, a help meet to him there. We visited her in Darwin some years later and saw that God was using her in her work within the college. She was very well accepted.

She was such a different person from that stubborn young teenage girl in Mungandai. Seeds had been sown many years earlier in preparation for this ministry, not just by us, but by the previous matron at Mungandai, who was a godly woman and had been there for several years.

[17 : 01] You never know. You think that no one, your children or children that you may be influencing are not listening to you. But we fear, we are sure that God had his hand on Sue right from the very beginning and she was able to be used in later years.

Did we have those slides up, Jo, or...? Right. Oh, sorry. Just very quickly. Sue is the girl on the left-hand side.

She's got hold of an afternoon tea there and she's going to serve them with afternoon tea. And then there she is again later in Darwin on this side at Nungalina College.

It just shows how she has grown into such a lovely young woman. Thank you, Nancy, for sharing that with us. Let us go on and think about the soil.

The condition of the soil at planting time largely determines the harvest. This truth can greatly encourage the Christian worker who has become discouraged because sometimes as we're talking to people, we become discouraged because they don't seem to want to hear.

[18:18] They don't seem to want to know about the truth of Christ. And they seem to close their ears, as indicated here. But this parable indicates that Jesus knows that this happens and only certain people, only individual people, will respond to the gospel message.

And so we don't know who those people are. And therefore, we should be encouraging our neighbours, our friends, to accept Christ as Saviour and Lord.

There are many different responses to the word of God, taught in the classroom, proclaimed from the pulpit, and whispered from heart to heart. That's where we can become involved.

Please follow me as we look at the verses of the parable, verses 4 to 9, and then the explanation 18 to 23. I'm not going to deal with them separately because there's not time for that this morning.

And we see that the four parts, the deceived, the demonstrative, the distracted, and the discerning hearts.

[19:29] And first of all, along the wayside hearers, they are deceived hearts. And it says in verse 4, And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up.

And of course, the path over there would be very hard and firm down, and the seed would just sit on the top. And there the bird would come and take it away.

And Jesus goes on to explain that in 19, When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, it is the evil one who comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart.

This is what was sown on the path. And some hearts are hard, unreceptive, and do not have any intention of receiving the word of God.

And you come across these people, but you keep on just talking to them. Some deceive themselves into thinking that Christian commitment is unimportant.

[20:36] And there might be people within our congregation today who say, It's not important if I'm fully committed or not. I come along to church. Praise the Lord, you come to church.

But we need to be fully committed to Jesus Christ. Other hearts are different. The gospel is not permitted to enter the mind or conscience of some people.

Some neither believe nor disbelieve. They merely ignored it. The people hear the word of God, but let the devil snatch it away before it has opportunity to germinate and grow.

And then you've got the stony ground. In verse 5, and I'm particularly reading these verses so we can grasp at them. Other seeds fell on rocky ground where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly since they had no depth of soil.

But when the sun rose, they were scorched, and since they had no root, they withered away.

Over there in the Middle East, often there's a great big, just under the soil, a great big shallow rock vase, and just an inch or two of soil on top of it.

[21:49] And those will just sprout up quickly, and then they'll wither when the sun comes on them. And how important it is that you and I become steeped in the word of God. We have God's word within our heart, and we are able to withstand being in a rocky place like that.

There are many who receive the seed of God's truth in a superficial manner. They make sentimental, emotional response. The moral nature is not affected.

We just go and do the things we've always done before. The intellect will remain unchanged. And many are attracted to Christ, but never let his teaching get beyond the surface.

How easy it is to come and sit in church, but not allow the word of God to speak to us personally.

And then the occupied heart. And this hits many of us, doesn't it?

We're distracted. Verse 7 says, Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. And then in verse 22, describing that, Jesus said, As for what was sowing among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the law of wealth choked the word, and it yields nothing.

[23:14] How easy we can be choked with the world around us. It's all around us. Some seed fell on soil that was already occupied by thorny plants, and they would just choke the seed as it grew

up.

The seed didn't have much of a chance. It wasn't easy to pack. It's very easy to pack life for so full of interest that we have no time for Christ.

The sport has really crept in and taken over many of our times of being interested in the word of God. As life is complicated, some have difficulties in establishing priorities in our lives.

The cares of this world, the anxiety over normal routine of life, causes people to become preoccupied that God is crowded out.

So many things to do, so many hours to work at work. The deceitment of riches, the luxuries that are available, have a very becoming, a way of becoming considered as necessities.

[24 : 21] We think it's necessary to have all the things that other people have. People judge success in the terms of riches. And then, the desire for more things.

And we see in 1 Timothy 9.10, People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap, and into many foolish and harmful desires, and plunge men and women into ruin and destruction.

And the continuation of that verse in 10, for the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

But then we come to the good ground. And this is where you and I can make sure that our life is right with the Lord. In verse 8, other seed fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty, that anyone who hears, who has heard, listen.

And in verse 23, Jesus explains again to us, but as for what was sown in good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields.

[25 : 48] in one case, one hundredfold, in another sixty, in another thirty. We need to hear the word of God. We need to read the word of God.

We need to memorise the word of God. We need to have the word of God living within us. Some people go to church to take a walk. Some people go to have a laugh and others go to talk.

Some go to meet a partner. Some go to meet a friend. Others go because they have time to spend. Those who are wise go to worship and to hear divine truth.

Hear the word of God attentively. Hear the word of God prayerfully, praying that God might speak to us. Hear the word of God responsibly and hear the word of God obediently and put it into action.

And in those verses, there's a few other verses there, 10 to 18, then the disciples came and asked Jesus, why do you speak to them in parables?

[26 : 57] This was a private conversation that Jesus was having with his disciples, maybe still on the boat, maybe they joined him on the boat. and they said to him, why are you speaking in parables?

He answered, to you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven. To you it has been given to know the secrets of heaven.

That Jesus has died, that Jesus has risen, that Jesus wants to live in your heart as Saviour and Lord. And you have ears to hear?

Well, hear and allow this to happen. The disciples then and now are to know the secrets of the gospel. God's truth only comes through the revelation by the word and by the Holy Spirit.

And just to apply that to us today, how do we respond to the word of God? Do you hear the word of God in a hard-hearted manner?

[27 : 58] That you're not letting it take root? Do you hear the word of God in a half-hearted manner? Oh, yes, I'll obey the Lord at the times I want to?

Or do you hear the word of God in a whole-hearted manner, allowing the Lord Jesus Christ to take and to use your life? The Lord is the sower, the Lord is the seed, the Lord is the farmer.

He wants to live in your heart as Saviour and Lord today. Let's just have a word of prayer. We thank you, our Father, that Jesus proclaimed the word boldly to the people of that day.

We thank you, our Father, that the word has been proclaimed to us as the scriptures have been read. May we go away from this place of worship and put you first and foremost as the King of our heart to be our Saviour and our Lord.

May we share the precious word of God with other people around us. This we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.