

God is speaking to you everyday. They are not always audible messages with a distinct tone and a noticeable volume. But they are things that God uses in our everyday lives to speak to us. We might miss them if we don't pay attention. For those of us in the Midwest, this is the time of year when a lot of things are starting to blossom and come into full bloom. There a message in that. And I think if we listen hard enough, we might hear God speaking in this season. In fact, Jesus would use moments like these.

Jesus would take some very ordinary, things that they would see or hear in their everyday lives and give new meaning. And one of the most common examples Jesus would use were topics around seeds, planting, sowing, harvesting, sowers, , etc. God used these experiences that were so familiar to speak to them in ways they could understand. So I'm hoping the same thing for us over these next few weeks as we dive into the theme, "*It's not seed, it's the soil.*"

The parable begins with a sower going out to sow into his field. It was typical in Jesus day for a sower to carry a leather pouch across their shoulders filled with seed and would walk down paths slinging the seed out, much like we do when planting grass. The seed would be "broadcast" into all sorts of soil. Sometimes they will fall on good ground and other times they would on hard soil. But there is something to be said about the sowers mindset. So, let's begin by looking at this through the lens of the sower.

Every planter or every sower starts with the end goal is mind. They have a vision of what they want to reap or see as the outcome. It takes courage, it takes faith, it takes a certain kind of person to stare into empty field with only a bag full of small possibilities and believe and hope that something is going to happen. But remember

he's working backwards. That will dictate the rest of his decisions. When u look into the fields on your own life what do hope to see? What do you envision for yourself or your community? How do want your faith evolve? According to actions of the sower we start here and work backwards.

So now the sower is operating off pure faith. Remember he's not there by accident. There is something the sower is trying to grow in those empty fields. There is something he is intentionally trying to cultivate. There is a purpose behind what he's doing.

So he's not there by accident. Maybe this is Gods way of saying to us that some outcomes are not by accident. Maybe the growth, the blossoms that you see everyday is a reminder that we too can cultivate certain outcomes and growth that we want in our own lives. We are not at the mercy of chance and happenstance. We have the chance and the choice to decide the kind of faith we want to cultivate? What kind of home do want to cultivate? What kind of relationships do you want to cultivate?

Outcomes are not by accident. (Slide) People don't accidentally draw closer to God. People don't accidentally graduate. People don't accidentally have healthy relationships. Church don't accidentally people become accepting. Inclusion and diversity dont happen by accident. We don't stumble on being compassionate or forgiving.

In fact, he's knows some seeds are going to fall on hard ground, but he's out there any way. He knows some of the seeds are going to feed the birds, but he's out there anyway. He understands that things don't have to work out perfectly in order for this process to

be fruitful. But his belief in what's possible in these small seeds outweighs the fear of what ifs and he plants anyway!

Reaping what we sow

Because the sower has an idea of what they want to receive, this dictates the kind of seed they plant. It's important to plant not just any seed, but the right kind of seed. Seeds are the small decisions and behaviors that we make today in light of what we want to grow tomorrow. (Slide). Paul's tell the church in Galatia, "whatever one sows, he will also reap." Unfortunately we always associate this idea with negative outcomes. It's always attributed to the person that does something wrong as a reminder that sooner or later it's going to come back around to them. You reap what you sow. But if that's the only way we look at this, then I think we lose something divine in the process.

The way that nature works, we reproduce or replicate what we are. We multiply what we are.

So let's try this out. I have different kinds of seeds.

I have cantaloupe seeds.

I also have cucumber seeds.

I have pumpkin seeds.

I didn't make this up, I'm only telling you what biology says. I can't plant pumpkin seeds and expect cucumbers.

I can't plant cucumber seeds and expect cantaloupe.

What will I reap if I plant cucumber seeds?

Sometimes we want certain outcomes but aren't planting the right seeds! I can't reap what I have not sown.

If I want to reap joy and peace, I can't sow seeds of confusion and discord. If we want to grow in our faith, we have to plant the seeds or commit to those small behaviors or decisions that get us closer to

what we imagine. If I want healthy relationships, I can plant toxicity. I can't plant lack of communications. I can't plant selfishness. I actually to commit the decisions and behaviors that lead to helpful connections. As nation, if we want to reap unity, togetherness, oneness but have historically and continuously planted seeds of othering, marginalization, fear, privilege, hate, indifference, apathy, it's no wonder why we continuing harvest divisions. Sooner or later, if we don't like what we are receiving, maybe it's time to change what we're planting. Because our present was at one time our future. Now it's the past. But what we planted in the past has Become what we receive and experience in the present. Newsflash. The seeds I am planting today becomes what I reap in this empty fields tomorrow. **Be careful what you plant (slide)** So here's the question. What seeds are you planting? What's in your pouch.

The farmer is making an assumption about the seed. The sower is planting the seed because of what they know the seed "can" do. They believe the seed is more than what meets the eye. They are confident that the seed is not done growing. It's not in it final stages. that the limits of the seed will grow far beyond what his eyes see in the moment. They without a shadow of a doubt that the seed is just getting starting.)

The sower believes something about the seed. The seed hasn't produced anything. The seed hasn't grown. The seed isn't rooted in anything. It can't make the sower any kind of profit yet. And yet the sower is banking on the potential and possibilities of the seeds that he has.

This is counter cultural to how we live. We want finished products. We want accomplished.... But that's not how God often operates.

I'm amazed at how God will take people with no experience, very little work experience, Sometimes when God speaks, God answers in seeds not. God answers with seeds.

Answers in seeds: It's in you

At this point the sower has empty fields and small seeds. He desires a harvest but all he has are seeds. This can be quite disconcerting because the the size of the seed rarely resembles the character of the harvest. Seed pales in comparison to the outcome. Let me prove it! You can't look at apple seeds and tell is going to grow into an apple. (Slide) You can look at lemon seeds and conclude it's going change into something sour and yellow. (Slide) No one looks at the seeds of a watermelon and thinks it's going to look like that (slides). Ok, you're still not convinced what kind of seed are these?(slides)

You might have some seeds and have no clue what's in your hand. Discouragement begins to creep in when we've expected certain things from God and our faith, and what we receive doesn't look like what we were expecting. We wanted fruit, not seeds. We wanted outcomes not beginnings. But God often answers in seeds? (Slides)

We discount what we have and the possibilities that exist in the seeds.

Here's the good news....

Everything you need is in the seed. I know this is hard to believe. Biology is an interesting concept. But a seed will transform and grow into what you need it to be. A seed bares very little resemblance to its harvest. On the surface it's hard to imagine that you can get that out of that. The seed has everything it needs. You

don't have to add roots. You don't have to add leaves. You don't have to add branches. You don't give it something that it does not already have. It's in there! But we may have to give it time to grow.

Our kids are at the age now, where it seems like everything shrinks too fast. We buy shoes and in a few months, they don't fit. We buy pants and in a few weeks they seem like a completely different size. And it's not like they have jobs where they can pitch in on the orders. We have to keep buying more as they grow. So we are at the point, where even if we buy something and it's too big, we don't return it. Because sooner or later we know they are going to do what? Grow into it? There are some things that God gives us that have to grow.

Grow into it? I need grow into it. Am I patient enough with God to allow certain answers to grow? What is God trying to grow in me?

Close

Predicated on you having something in the ground! I'm wasting my time unless I have something in the ground. This is difficult for most people to understand. It defies the laws of gravity but not theology. We think what goes up must come down, but with God things have to go down before they come. That's why scripture reminds us that unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground it remains a single grain of wheat, but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

He puts it into the ground. When he plants it in the right soil, he covers it with dirt. And walks away. This is what's troubling. Planting feels very similar to something being buried. If we are not careful you'll think God is burying what God is really trying to plant. On this first sermon, I just to encourage somebody. I know it looks like the seed is buried. I know it feels like your being hope is

buried. Feels like the possibilities are being buried. Feels like your gifts are being buried. You're not being buried you were just being planted. Because when the right seed is in the right soil, what was planted sooner or later will come back up! Hopes are coming. Gifts are coming up. Faith is coming up. Reputation is coming up. Strength is coming up..... the very thing you thought was buried will spring forth new life, but only if it find the right soil. Let us pray.