

THE SOWER

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Lessons: Isaiah 55:6-11, Mark 4:1-20

Have you ever opened a packet of seeds? Seeds are really wonderful things. In the spring, you can go to a store and buy some seeds. Then you can take them home and plant them in the ground. And then, after a while, these seeds begin to grow. They send roots down into the ground, and then they begin to grow upwards. They turn into plants.

There are all kinds of different seeds you can plant. You can plant flower seeds, so that, when they grow, you will eventually have some beautiful flowers in your garden. Or you can plant vegetable seeds. You could plant lettuce seeds—and then, after the plants have grown big enough, you can pick the leaves, and you will have lettuce to eat. Or you could plant squash seeds. Then, after the plants have grown, they will eventually produce squash, which you could pick and cook and eat for dinner. Or you could plant corn. Some corn can grow very high indeed. And after it has grown, ears of corn appear, and when these ears are ripe, you can pick them and have them for supper.

Seeds are wonderful things. They are often very tiny. They don't even look as if they are alive. If you put them in the ground, though, the Lord can make them grow into plants, so that you can have flowers to look at, or food to eat.

Now did you know that in some ways the Lord's Word itself is like a packet of seeds. Each thing that the Lord teaches in His Word is like a seed, a seed which, when it is planted, can grow. And do you know where these seeds are planted? They are planted in people's minds. Each time you learn something that the Lord teaches in His Word, it is as if this teaching was planted in your mind. And once it is planted in your mind, it can grow.

If you plant vegetable seeds in the ground, eventually you will get vegetables to eat. If you plant flower seeds, you will get flowers. But if the Lord's teachings are planted in your mind, do you know what you get, eventually? What you have learned from the Lord's Word will grow, and it will bring you happiness. You could even say that the things the Lord teaches in His Word are happiness seeds—seeds which the Lord can make grow in your mind to make you happy. This is why the angels of heaven are happy. The things they have learned from the Lord's Word have made them very happy indeed.

This is why, in what we read from the Word this morning, the Lord compares Himself to a Sower—a man sowing seeds in the field. When the Lord teaches

you things in His Word, it is as if He was sowing seeds in your mind, seeds that can grow and make you happy.

Sometimes, though, when seeds aren't planted properly, they don't grow well. Suppose that you took some when the ground was really hard. Then the seeds wouldn't grow, would they? In fact, they would probably be eaten by the birds as soon as you left. Or suppose you planted your seeds in very rocky soil. If there were rocks just under the ground, then the plants wouldn't be able to grow proper roots. Roots are how plants get water out of the ground, and without proper roots, these plants would tend to dry up and wither away as soon as the weather got really hot. Or suppose you put the seeds in a place where there were a lot of weeds. The seeds might begin to grow, but the weeds would grow even faster and wouldn't leave any space for your plants.

If seeds are to grow properly, then they must be planted in the proper kind of ground—ground where they can send down roots and get plenty of water and plenty of food out of the ground. And it is the same, the Lord says, with the teachings you learn from His Word. Suppose you learn things from the Lord's Word, but don't really care about what the Lord is saying. Then your mind is like hard ground, or like rocky ground, where plants can't grow properly. Or suppose all you are interested in is doing things that are bad. Then your mind is like ground with lots of weeds. Evil things are like weeds, weeds which don't let the Lord's teachings grow in your mind.

If you learn what the Lord says in His Word, though, and think about it, and pay attention to it, and then do what the Lord tells you to do in His Word, your mind is then like good ground. The Lord's teachings, like seeds, can grow in your mind. They can send down good roots, and grow and grow, and fill your mind with happiness.

This is why it is so important to learn from the Lord's Word. This is why it is so important to pay attention to the Word and do what it says. When you do this, then the things that the Lord teaches in His Word can grow. They are happiness seeds, and these seeds can grow and make you happy forever and ever.

Amen.

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