

Putting Down Roots: So Many Seeds!

08.22.2021

Context of series:

Roots – weeds - seeds

Read Mark 4:1-9, 15-20:

Jesus says that there are 3 reasons that seeds

The Word of God

Won't have an impact when they're planted

They can be confused

Like the seed sown on the path

They can be distracted

Like the seed sown in the thorns

Or they can be isolated

Like the seed sown in shallow soil

Jesus said that plant withered because it
had no root

And a root connects a plant to good soil
You & I need to be connected and growing
with people

Who are connected and growing with
God

Be strategic

This is one of my favorite stories from Jesus

I love it and I've read it and taught it often
But something jumped out at me that I'd never
noticed before

Did you ever think how ridiculous this
must've sounded to His audience?

We don't think it sounds ridiculous
Because it's famous literature

Jesus said it

And it's recorded in the best selling
book of all time

So we don't think it sounds crazy at all
But think how strange it must've sounded
to a 1st-century gardener who was listening

Jesus' bottom line:

Don't plant seeds on a hard path

In a gravel lot

Or in the middle of a thorn bush

That's sage gardening advice right there

They would've shook their heads and said

Who would do that?!?

Who needs this teaching?!?

Apparently lots of people:

Matthew 7:13b-14 (NLT) - The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it.

What seems patently obvious to Jesus
Is bewildering to many of us

Many of us
Are planting this sacred seed
These powerful words
Into hearts and lives that resemble:
A hard path
A gravel lot
Or the middle of a thorn bush

Hebrews 4:12-13a (NLT) - For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God.

The Word of God is powerful

It cuts through our pretense and our excuses

It exposes our motivations and fears and control issues

So the seed is not the problem

The Word of God is not the problem

Jesus – as He often does

Makes complicated things simple

He says, when this powerful Word

This seed that is ripe with potential and
authority and significance

Lands on the human heart

If there's no confusion

And the Word is allowed to sink in

If there's no distraction

And the recipient gives it due attention

And if there's no isolation

So people have someone else to help
them grow

That Word will do everything required

**Isaiah 55:11b - My word that goes out from
My mouth... will not return to Me empty, but
will accomplish what I desire and achieve the
purpose for which I sent it.**

This is His vision for your life

Read it again

This is His vision

So plant strategically

And I would suggest that

We use this metaphor as a checklist

Am I confused?

If so

Make that a priority

If you don't feel you understand much

I cannot think of a better opportunity for
you

Than to prioritize this Rooted series coming up
in a couple weeks

You will have a better understanding of
God's Word

Coming out of those 10 weeks

Than you have now

And that will open the door for God's
Word to do the work that He sent it to
do

I want you to notice the personal nature that
He uses to describe this first one:

Look at verse 15

Satan comes and takes it

Not it just sits there

Or the rain washes it away

Satan comes and takes it

This makes prayer

A little more strategic

And a lot more important

Than many of us have come to believe

This is more than a quick thank you before you eat

Or a “now I lay me down to sleep” before you go to bed

You & I have an enemy

And he knows

Better than we do

The power in this book

These words are alive and powerful and persuasive

And he doesn't want them to get beneath the surface

And he's actively scheming to pluck them away

Before they sink in

So pray before you read them

Pray as you drop your kids off for class

Or your teens off for student night

If you're a teacher on Sunday or Wednesday

First of all – thank you

For working to get the Word of God

Inside the hearts of our kids

Thank you

We need to pray for you more than we do

And I want to challenge you to pray more

As you prepare

As you travel to the church

As the kids come in

And as you begin to teach

Church - I am convinced that we have got to
pray more

Bolder

More strategic prayers

Join me in that

Do I understand?

Am I isolated?

Jesus said that when that seed penetrates

And begins to do its work

Troubles come with it

Look at verses 16-17

I want you to notice a key word here

It's the word "when"

Not "if" but "when"

If you read this book

You'll have to change some habits

You might have to add some things

Or take some things away

You may have to approach a relationship
differently

Or stop it all together

And those things

Even though they're best for us

Hurt

Jesus is saying- listen

God's Word will make your life better

But it won't make it easier

So if you're going to let Him in

You're gonna need some support

Am I distracted?

Do I have too many things going in my life?

Is there something that needs cutting?

A tell-tell sign:

When I asked the first question – Am I confused?

Or the second question about getting connected

Your instant pushback was that you're too busy

That's a problem

Jesus specifically mentions three key distractions:

Look at verses 18-19

The worries of this life

The deceitfulness of wealth

The desires for other things

Let me ask you again

Do you think God's Word has the
opportunity to grow in you?

Or are you distracted?

I think many of us are like a house plant that
needs to be repotted

It's grown as much as it can in the space
that we've given it

It needs more room

He needs more room

We say all of the time that you need to:

Find Family

Know God

Discover Purpose

Make an Impact

Describe

Be strategic

There are fixable things

Keeping your spiritual life stunted

Strategically fix those

Second: **Plant more**

Jesus said that seeds only have a 25% success rate

Not because the seeds aren't effective or potent or powerful

But because of confusion and isolation and distraction

How crazy would it sound

If someone wanted a flowerbed full of a specific kind of flower

And the nursery told them that 3 out of 4 of this kind of plant doesn't make it

And yet knowing this - they choose to plant... only one or two ... plants

And then later, they wonder aloud what went wrong when they didn't have a full flowerbed

Or maybe go back to the nursery and complain

Get on Facebook and describe how the gardener should have done more

They just needed to plant more

How many of you have eaten wasabi?

That little green dollop of spicy stuff on your plate at Asian restaurants

When I hear wasabi, (honestly) I just think of that stupid commercial

Where everybody's screaming – wasabi

But that's a different story

You may not realize but

“Wasabi is deemed by most experts to be the most difficult plant in the world to grow.” - Kim Gittleson

I mean, everything has to be so specific

Wasabi needs constant access to water

Like water running over it in a waterbed

But it doesn't like to be submerged like a waterlily

Just lots of water

Air temp must be maintained

Between 46° and 64°

It's a very tight window

But the water temp is even more specific

The water must remain between 54° and 59°

If the water gets too hot or too cold

Or the air temp gets too hot or too cold

Even by a couple degrees

The wasabi won't survive

If it doesn't get almost constant access to water

Without being submerged

The wasabi won't survive

Wasabi is very prone to blight or disease

So if the farmer doesn't monitor *that* daily

The wasabi won't survive

Show me again, how many of you have eaten wasabi?

Experts say that's not true

Because it's so hard to grow

It is estimated that 95% of the wasabi served in restaurants

Is not really wasabi

It's a concoction of mustard, horseradish and green food coloring

Because restaurants would have to pay as much as \$140 / pound for real, authentic Wasabi root

And beyond that, wasabi root must be shredded within 10-15 minutes of the time you're going to serve the paste

Or it loses its flavor

So trust me

This is not *really* wasabi

In fact, I got a picture of the back

Zoom in a little

The top ingredients are water, soybean oil,
and a *blend* of horseradish & wasabi root

There's not much wasabi in that wasabi

But as difficult as wasabi is to grow

I don't think even it has a 75% failure rate

If Jesus is saying that the Word of God has a
75% failure rate

I'm not saying that's an absolute from Jesus

But it *is* the analogy He used

If seeds have a 75% failure rate

How vital is that we plant more seeds?!?

We need to be ever more diligent getting the
Word out to a lost & dying world

Let me stop a second

That phrase, “lost & dying world”

I’ve heard that my entire life

But it took on new meaning for me this week
watching the scenes from Afghanistan

We’re not accustomed in America

Seeing people so desperate to leave our
country

That they would cling to a plane as it takes
off

Or that women would be so afraid for their
safety

That you’d go out in the middle of the day
And not find any women... any where

Outside of Christ's redeeming work

Our world is destined for more decay

More selfishness

More violence

More struggle

I don't know when the end will be

But it seems to me that our world is
cracking a bit

It's dying

Birth pains, Scripture says

That are pointing us to the end

Our world is lost and dying without Jesus

So we need to be ever more diligent getting
the Word *out* to a lost & dying world

And we need to be ever more diligent getting the Word of God *in* to our lives that are broken without Him

Think about this:

Do you ever read the Bible and nothing jumps out at you?

If you say no, you've either never read the Bible

So you need to read it

Or you're a liar

So you need to read it

What if – I'm just supposing here

What if that's just part of it?

So I'm not saying the Bible's seeds are not effective or potent or powerful

But Jesus said the reality

In this life
Is that they won't always land
They won't always produce fruit in us
Maybe because we don't understand them
Maybe because we need other people to
help us apply them
Or maybe because we're distracted
But if that's true
And Jesus seems to allude that it's true
Then we have to have more seed
Intentionally sow much more seed!

#3: I want to call us to **Persevere**

“Persevere”

We read Mark's account of Jesus' teaching
Luke says it a little different:

Luke 8:14-15 - The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.

Too many Christians stop growing before they start producing

It's more than having a good heart

It's more than coming in contact with the Word

You must retain it

Hang onto it

Meditate on it

Dwell in it and let it dwell in you

And then persevere

Keep planting the Word in your life
And keep planting the Word in your kid's
lives

Keep planting the Word in our world

Persevere till you see the harvest

In an area that you planted in

Let me say that again:

Persevere till you see the harvest

In an area that you planted in

One of the cool things about a church

When you invest your time

When you invest your money

You are part of the team

That is making an impact in our community

And that means that you can feel spiritual
satisfaction

From being part of that collective effort

I want you to have a sense of ownership when someone comes up out of the baptistery

Like – God used *us* to help that person find Christ

I want you to have a sense of ownership when someone's needs are met

When one of the hundreds of kids who every month find a Jetpack of food in their backpack

I want you to feel ownership there

You didn't have to pack that JetPack

Or pay for *that* JetPack

When a student at Chapman's Retreat

Or EA Cox or Highland Park Elementary

I want you to have some spiritual
satisfaction

Knowing that you were part of helping
that student

Get some food

And some encouragement

To get through the weekend

In a difficult spot

Knowing that she's not alone

When I was in high school

I played on the basketball team

And by played

I meant I practiced during the week

And drank gateraid from the end of the
bench on Friday night

But I was part of the team

So when our small town team made it to the
sweet 16 for the entire state

Indiana didn't have divisions in their sports
then

So we were in the final 16 teams in the
entire state

And remember, basketball is the state
religion in Indiana

You can bet that I took pride from being on the
team

Because I was there during the conditioning

I was there night after night practicing

So I didn't hit the winning shot

I didn't any shot – I was just on the JV team

But I was on the team

I want you on our team

So that when a WellSpring person offers a
blessing bag and a kind smile

To a homeless person in need

I want you to know that you were a part of that

Because you were throwing down seeds

There are few things in life more satisfying

Then when someone comes up out of the
baptistery

Renewed

Committed

Life Changed

God did that

No one is confused about that

But when you know that you were a part of it

Because you were sowing into their life

You were helping remove the confusion
so the seed could get in

You were providing a root to help
process the tough times

You were helping them keep on track
when the distractions came

You persevered

And God allowed you to see life growing
from the field you planted

How many apple trees am I holding? {Apple}

The straight answer is none, right? It's not a
tree, it's an apple

But the real answer is bigger than that, isn't it?

{Cut open the apple}

I'm really holding _____ apple trees in my hand, right?

Nope – the real answer is still bigger

Because each of these seeds

Represent a tree that will produce many apples

That each have the capacity to produce many trees

That will each produce many more apples

So how many apple trees am I holding?