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Parable Seed/Soil
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So where do we find ourselves in this parable?

This question is the best approach to all of the parables . . .
where are we in it.

Many people hear this parable and quickly jump to an association with
the seeds. But in this story the seed is the Good News of Jesus
Christ.

The sower is Jesus or perhaps God the Father.

We are the ground . . . the soil.

So from this perspective in hearing the parable another question pops
up: What kind of soil are we as the Good News is given to us?

It's a very serious question . . . because Jesus says almost
ominously "Whoever has ears ought to hear."

If we hear with open ears the message is loud and clear.

Jesus speaks in parables not with purpose of hiding the truth or of
confusing anyone. These things are simply the result of
hearts that are closed to the Good News . . .

. . . closed in the manner he describes in the parable . . .

. . . those who in many ways and for many reasons give up on the Good News.

He wants us all to be the rich soil that receives the seed and bears much fruit . . . an incredible yield . . . because this is what the seed of the Good News does for humanity.

The disciples in the Gospel would fall into this group (with exception Judas in the end). They all come to bear abundant fruit for God because of their openness to receiving and sharing the seed of the Good News.

I had an experience recently—flew to NY (LaGuardia). There's construction there and traffic is nightmarish. So I had arranged for a car to pick me up.

Somehow (possibly the crucifix I wore) I found myself in a conversation about various beliefs of our faith. Now it wasn't a theology debate. This man, Dave, wanted to hear the truth of our beliefs from a true believer. He said in so many words that he wanted to hear more because it rang true to him. He was

hungry for it.

Now someone might say-yeah, ok...a nice experience...but just a fluke.

To that someone I would say wait for the rest of the story.

Four days later when the car picked me up to go back to the airport, guess who was driving! Dave had made arrangements in the company to be my return driver.

I got into the car and he asked if we could continue where we left off. He had more questions:

Is God a personal God?

Will the body rise?

The nature of love?

The nature of sacrifice?

Another full hour of conversation with just me, Dave and the Holy Spirit.

It seems to me that the real difficulty in evangelizing . . . spreading the Good News . . . is not that the world is not hungry for it. Rather it lies in what type of soil (ground) we are as the seed lands on us whose commission it is to share it.

So in terms of what kind of ground (soil) we are, how does it look when a moment comes to really express our faith?

Are we worried and anxious about how we will be received?

- Do we rationalize and opt out?
- Are we fearful of how little we think we know?
- Are we too busy . . . too tired . . . unmotivated (or lazy)?
- How consistently sad or grumpy are we?

One of the great saints declared that we don't need any more sad-faced Christians!

It's counterproductive! When others see our belief they should see our joy and our conviction!

When people encounter believers who are confident, trusting, faithful to and joyous in Jesus Christ, we won't need theology degrees to win converts.

When a joyful face expresses what they believe, others take notice and listen!

Not so much with sad, grumpy faces.

Someone might say, "Oh, I don't believe the Gospels."

The simple response is "Well, I do. Every bit of it. And it gives me peace and joy that cannot be gotten anywhere else except from the Good News of Jesus Christ."

The other day while walking I ran into an elderly neighbor whose husband passed away recently. She told me how she had a really bad moment where she almost despaired with the thought that she would never see her husband again. Then grace touched her heart and she realized that that was the devil tempting her. She said she remembered that we have the communion of saints and that she would certainly see her husband again.

She shared this certainty with her children and grandchildren, her Church community and her friends. And when she shared it with me there were some tears in her eyes, but her smile radiated joy. At this dark moment of life she was aglow with Good News that death has been conquered and we are all in the hands of a loving God.

I finished my walk a hundred pounds lighter because she was such fruitful soil!

In the parable, which of the four types of soil sound like something joyous to be?"

- The path – walked on – pressed down – exposed with no chance for anything to even get a start in growing.

This is soil so caught up in public opinion and cultural flow that any Good News of true joy or peace is snatched away long before it could even settle and make a difference. Because on this soil anything “different” is not allowed.

It could be soil that’s beaten down by governments, oppression or tyranny that smashes anything good that we desire before it can even begin. Any joy here?

- Rocky soil – with no depth – no nutrition – no room to grow and take root.

Here is soil that is so crammed full of worthless stuff that there’s no room (or even time) for anything of a true value to take hold.

This soil could look like obsession with adult toys or work or wealth. It could look like a mom or dad buried in a smart phone while their child tries unsuccessfully to get their attention.

It could look like a family so busy with sports that there’s no

room for dinner together or prayer.
It could look like a full DVR or binge watching TV shows.

Where's the joy?

- Ground choked by thorns – choked and trapped.

Here's soil with great potential for growing things, but it produces so much that is unhealthy or harmful that Good News of the Kingdom of God is choked out of existence.

It might look like constant controversy, habitual dissatisfaction, perpetual challenge to outside authority.

It might look like the KKK . . . bullying . . . or just name-calling.

Sarcasm, doubt casting and dream-smashing grow well in this soil. The thorns of ridicule and political dirt-digging grow well here also.

But not much joy or peace.

- Or rich soil – everything needed to bear abundant fruit of the best kind . . . the fruit of God.

Here, then, we will find the things of God . . . humility, faith, virtue, grace, gifts of the Holy Spirit, fruits of the Holy Spirit.

In this ground the Good News is accepted, grows and is shared with the world.

The Kingdom of God is at hand here . . .and there's joy and peace.

So what kind of soil am I? That's the question we ask ourselves today.

The choice . . . as with all things of faith . . . is ours to make.

That's what Isaiah said. And that's what Jesus reiterates.

Joy and peace are ours for the taking. Good fruit is ours for the making.

Those who have ears ought to hear.