Pentecost 6 – Proper 10 – Year A 2017

This is a wonderful parable for gardening folk. We all know that the soil we plant in has so much to do with what comes up. And we also know that there are SO many different types of soil… clay is good for some things, sandy soil for others. And as for the seeds we plant – some seem willing to grow anywhere, and others just won’t live in the soil we have..

There are two questions that came to me from this parable, though:

The first is: What are – where are – each of these “soil conditions” in my own life?

*Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path.*

The seed sown on the path… the evil one snatching it away. Ah… for me, the path is my plans for the day, perhaps, or the moment or the year. The path is my focus on what I’m doing at a particular time…the ‘evil one’ is my inattentiveness to the Word of God, the Spirit of God, the Presence of God showing up right there, where I am, on the path – because I’m too busy moving on down the road.

*As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away.*

The seed sown on rocky ground…no root.. lasts only until trouble arises “on account of the word…” And I ask myself how many times I’ve thought of calling someone, or visiting someone, or sending a card, and then not done it – because of the “trouble” involved. Or I think of how long it took me to move from where I was to where I am now – because I didn’t want the “trouble or persecution” that would arise…

*As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing.*

And the thorns? The explanation says the thorns are the cares of the world and the lure of wealth. I think perhaps the thorns are whatever I let choke the life out of the word. I have talked before of what can happen when we get caught in the details of the story – were there really only 5 loaves and two fish? Can Jesus really be present in gluten-free bread? The thorns are, perhaps, whatever I let distract me from the ‘truth’ that is carried in the Word…

*But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.*

As for the good soil… the question waiting for me here is, what must I do to make my life good soil for the word? – I know in the flower beds, I have to get rid of the weeds and the big rocks… and it takes ‘sitting’ time for me to do that in my own life. And it takes attention – so that I can be attentive to the Presence of God in the path, so that I can recognize the inspiration of the Spirit when it comes and then can act on it, so that I can center in on the Truth, the reality of God’s presence – and not get sucked in or choked off by the details.

But I also have to regularly water the flower beds – and add fertilizer. And that, too, for me means regular “sitting” time – meditation, reading things that feed my soul, resting in the quiet of the Presence of God regularly so I DO recognize that Presence in the day-to-day.

The second main question that came to me from the gospel today is this:

Am I willing to sow seed with as much abandon as the sower in the parable did?

Am I willing to speak or act, doing or saying what I feel called to do or say, and not worry about the results? - Because that seems to be the lavish nature of God shown in this story…

So this is what I take from today’s Gospel: I need to work on my soil… even as I celebrate the lavishness of God who just strews love all around as if there will always be enough, because there is.

[Isaiah 55:10-13](http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearA_RCL/Pentecost/AProp10_RCL.html#ot2)[Psalm 65: (1-8), 9-14](http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearA_RCL/Pentecost/AProp10_RCL.html#ps2)[Romans 8:1-11](http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearA_RCL/Pentecost/AProp10_RCL.html#nt1)[Matthew 13:1-9,18-23](http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearA_RCL/Pentecost/AProp10_RCL.html#gsp1)