

Parable of the Sower

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Parables

4 Again he began to teach beside the sea. Such a very large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat on the sea and sat there, while the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. 2 He began to teach them many things in parables, and in his teaching, he said to them: 3 "Listen! A sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and the birds came and ate it up. 5 Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up quickly, since it had no depth of soil. 6 And when the sun rose, it was scorched; and since it had no root, it withered away. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. 8 Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold." 9 And he said, "Let anyone with ears to hear listen!" 10 When he was alone, those who were around him along with the twelve asked him about the parables. 11 And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside, everything comes in parables; 12 in order that 'they may indeed look, but not perceive, and may indeed listen, but not understand; so that they may not turn again and be forgiven.'"

Lately I've spent a lot of time thinking about growth and change, and the fact that all life begins from a single seed. A seed that must first be planted, nurtured, and cultivated. I was walking in the park the other day and had a moment of awe when I realized that everything around me was a part of God's creation. Yea we know this in our mind, but how often do we think about it. How wonderful it is to be among the trees, the sky the grass, the animals, to witness it as I imagine God witnesses us, but also to be a part of it. To participate in the dance and flow of life is beauty beyond words. To my own amazement, I realized that God designed every single thing we see. From the tallest mountains the smallest microorganisms. Everything working together, and constantly in a state of **change**. The best part is, God gave us the ability to not only witness, but to understand and to create as well, albeit on a much smaller scale. Recently I've taken an interest in the intersection between spirituality and faith, and agriculture. I always believed that our relationship with God should be Earth based, paying special attention to our relationship to our food sources. We serve a God who gives and sustains life. How can we know God if we don't have a relationship with the earth that gives us life? When we sow seeds and take part in the process of life. God has given us a small glimpse into what it must feel like to create.

Some of you may be familiar with the prophetic fiction novels of Octavia Butler, An African American science fiction writer who wrote Parable of the Sower and Parable of the Talents, both in the 90s. These novels take an honest, but bleak look a possible trajectory of the human species in the wake of crippling social inequality, environmental decay, and global poverty. Believe it or not in These prophetic works there is an extremist president elected in the 2020s who uses the slogan “Make America Great again”. Octavia butler wrote this book in the 90s.... In parable of the sower, the main character Lauren Olamina starts a spiritual community called Earthseed that is centered around the idea that God is Change, she says that **All that we touch we change, all that we change, changes us, therefore the lasting truth is that God is change**. Although I don't agree with every aspect of Ms. Butlers ideas of God, I agree with a lot of it, and had to admit that there is truth in this statement. God is change. All that we touch we change, and all that we change changes us. and ultimately affects the world.

Everything we do in this life leaves an impact on someone else. We are always leaving legacies and sowing seeds even when we don't realize it. I started to ask myself what kind of seeds am I sowing and why? **I realized that We humans by default are sowers of heirloom seeds**. If any of you have ever had a garden, Heirloom seeds are harvested and passed down from generation to generation. They may have a certain taste, or strength in their makeup, resistance against pests, resiliency, a certain color etc. they are kept because someone at one point in time saw something VALUABLE WITHIN THEM, THAT WAS WORTH PRESERVING. When you eat a plant that was grown from an heirloom seed, you are literally eating something that shares the DNA as A plant that a person ate in some cases centuries ago. You are ingesting the same substance.

We are sowers of heirloom seeds, when doing so we are always bringing the past to life. That means that Everything in this world is the way it is because of the decisions of our ancestors. Everything that will become of this world is because of the decisions we are making right now. Not only do we sow heirloom seeds but we ourselves are heirloom seeds as a bundle of life experiences, ideologies and beliefs, all influenced by how we grew up and the environments we were exposed to. Some of those traits we know we must change or let go, while we transform

ourselves into the likeness of Christ.

God is always calling us to change, and God demands that we recognize that everything we touch, we change, because we are sowers of heirloom seeds, our actions, ideas, and decisions will have an impact on future generations, but as we sow these heirloom seeds, we must make sure that what we leave behind reflects the character of God and not ourselves or the harmful ideas of our society. They must reflect the best of what humanity can be and not the remnants of what we have been. They must be seeds of justice, love, and that ever so elusive beloved community, not the self, and the various isms that keep future generations trapped in destructive cycles. We know that some seeds and beliefs that have been passed down have been quite destructive.

We know this to be true therefore

If we are sowers of heirloom seeds, ask yourself, do the seeds that you sow give and nurture life, or stifle and constrain life? What are you touching, and thereby changing? Is it for the better or worse?

For some folks, the seeds they sow only serve themselves or reinforce antiquated ways of thinking so in reality nothing is changing at all. God calls us to places of growth, but if we are resistant to that positive change then we are stifling the life process not nurturing it. When we are resistant to the positive change that God calls us to we are stifling God. Keep in mind God calling us to change does not mean we have to abandon everything we are, or every idea we have been taught because there's a lot of things that serve good purposes, but we need to recognize where we can get better. Even in the Bible God was calling the people to sow heirloom seeds that honored the principles of the mosaic covenant, many of these communities were changing but it was for the worst, so they had to return and resurrect seeds of love and justice. In our case, God calls us to do the same but to also create something new.

Free will has given us the opportunity observe, assess, and to seek the more righteous way. Much like I was able to witness the beauty of God's creation in the park. It has given us the option to

witness the errors of what has been passed down, but, we have the option to do something about it. When I read Ms., Butlers work I couldn't help but realize as human beings we get trapped in cycles. Where the decisions of the past are constantly affecting our present. That isn't to say we are doomed to repeat the same mistakes over and over again. But we may be, if we don't sow new heirloom seeds. We must recognize that our past has affected our present, let us strive to break free from those harmful cycles

Everything that occurs has a generational effect, I learned from Ramona Peters, an indigenous elder with the Wampanoag tribe that every decision we make effects at least 7 generations in the future. We must conceive of ourselves not as isolated individuals who are living siloed existence but as links apart of a greater chain. We are always sowing heirloom seeds, upon an infinite chain. We cannot change the past, but we do have the power to decide what values are passed down. We have the power to nurture the best qualities in ourselves and others and ensure that they thrive a thousand generations from now. God encourages us to realize that our lives are a constant moral and spiritual evolution where we have the choice to change for the better, or to choose to stay the same. We have the option to sow heirloom seeds of love, truth, and wisdom and the best qualities that reflect the nature of Christ.

If we are sowing heirloom seeds, harboring and thus passing along our, traumas, afflictions, prejudices, beliefs God calls us to recognize that. we have the power to heal and break cycles of prejudice, injustice, and violence that we have inherited. We have the ability to stand in that park and as we witness Gods creation and ourselves as a part of it and say although I have caused harm or been harmed, I will create something new! I will sow new seeds. And if we ensure that the soil is healthy, whatever we create can be sustained indefinitely.

Friends I Want you to remember that God saw something valuable in you that was worthy of preserving, but we must hold ourselves and others accountable and ensure that whatever seeds have been preserved in our lives are just and righteous. If they aren't they must be discarded.

I'm sure we can agree that even though everything we touch we change, sometimes, those changes are for the worst, or are a repetition of the same patterns. Sometimes we think we are changing for the better but in fact it's more of the same. We all must reach a moment where we recognize some seeds we inherited instead should die, for they have outlived their purpose. If you possess an heirloom seed to a plant that your entire community is allergic to, it makes sense to let that seed go, if we possess seeds that poison the soil and destroy our crop yields it makes sense to let that go. Many ideologies have outlived their purpose and therefore must be abandoned in favor of seeds of love. If it is not built upon the love and grace of God, then what purpose does it serve? What are we sowing and why. As we live our life and approach our day of departure, do we ever stop to think what mark have I left upon this world? Will the seeds that I leave reflect the best of what I can be or the worst parts of myself, my ancestors, and the harmful ideologies of the world. Are we the sowing the seeds of love, justice, or trauma, and division?

All that we touch CHANGES, all that we change, changes us, for God is change which I believe to be true. God is always calling us to change because nothing in God's creation is stagnant. Everything is moving, growing, wilting or dying. Everything is changing and as sowers of heirlooms seeds everything we touch change and thus Changes us. But let us imagine ourselves as links on a greater chain of life, standing in the garden observing the beauty of creation, reminded that we have been granted the gift to create and to sow something new; we can stand in the footprints of God and know what it is like to plant, nurture, and cultivate. But that's a privilege, with that privilege comes the duty and responsibility to change this world for the better and sow seeds that honor life.