

Daily Reflection on Scripture
Week of February 12
Parables Part 5 –
The Sower and the Seed



Mark 4:26-30 – *Again, Jesus said: God's Kingdom is like what happens when a farmer scatters seed in a field. The farmer sleeps at night and is up and around during the day. Yet the seeds keep sprouting and growing, and he doesn't understand how. It is the ground that makes the seeds sprout and grow into plants that produce grain.*

Seeds of kindness, love, compassion, encouragement, forgiveness, service to others and faith.

Sunday, February 12, 2017 Seeds of Kindness

Ephesians 4:32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ has forgiven you.

Reflection: In this story about a farmer planting seeds, Jesus points out that the farmer doesn't understand the process he has set in motion by sowing the seeds. He hopes for a good harvest, he prays for it, but he doesn't really know the outcome. Yet, he sows the seeds anyway, with the faith that while he goes about his everyday life, the power and mystery of the earth will take over and do the work of bringing the seeds to life. In the same way, when we sow seeds of kindness we have to trust that even our small acts of kindness will grow and make a difference in someone's life. We may never know the full impact of those acts of kindness to someone else, but we trust that it will make a difference. This hope is like sowing seeds of faith in our own lives.

Sacred Pause: "Wherever there is a human being, there is an opportunity for a kindness." - Seneca

Monday, February 13, 2017 Seeds of Love

John 15: 12-13. My command is this. Love each other as I have loved you.

1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.

Reflection: It is a huge and seemingly impossible challenge to love as Jesus loved. We feel inadequate to live up to that kind of love, but every day brings opportunities for us to offer radical, love, to put others before ourselves, to reach out and risk loving fully as God loves. We will not live up to the challenge every moment of every day, but we can live every day with the intention of loving without reservation, giving ourselves fully to others in a spirit of love. Our intention to live this way is sowing seeds of love in the world and in ourselves.

Sacred Pause: "The only thing we never get enough of is love; and the only thing we never give enough of is love." – Henry Miller

Tuesday, February 14, 2017 Seeds of Compassion

Psalms 116:5 The Lord is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion.

Reflection: The definition of compassion is to suffer together. Compassion is much bigger than sympathy or pity. When we practice compassion we genuinely enter into the experience of another in the fullest way we can. The story of Jesus' crucifixion, not just his experience, but the impact it must have had on those who loved him is amazing. Even in the presence of agony and suffering beyond comprehension, the group of women who loved Jesus stayed with him until the end, to the very moment of his death. They were willing to stay with him in his suffering, even though they knew they couldn't do anything to help him, or change the outcome, they were willing to give the gift of their presence. Sometimes the hardest thing for us to do is to be willing to stay

with others in their times of suffering. It requires courage because it is difficult to be with someone who is suffering and not turn away.

It is an opportunity for us to be steadfast in our desire to suffer along with another, to show real compassion. Be watchful for opportunities to show compassion to someone. It will be a blessing to them and an opportunity for us to grow spiritually.

Sacred Pause: “The purpose of human life is to serve, and to show compassion and the will to help others.” – Albert Schweitzer

Wednesday, February 15, 2017 Seeds of Encouragement

1 Thessalonians 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

Reflection: It really is not so difficult to be an encourager. Sometimes it is as simple as saying those positive things that are really on your mind, but that you hesitate to say. It might be simply taking a few moments to talk with someone who is discouraged or has lost confidence in him or herself. It is a kindness to listen to their story and remind them that they are not what they do, or produce. They are not defined by their success or failure. Offer a blessing, offer words of healing and hope. Remind them that God loves them unconditionally. Caring for someone, being a friend, going out of your way to lift someone up who needs your support; these are seeds that can make a positive impact in the life of someone who needs encouragement.

Sacred Pause: “Today will never come again. Be a blessing, be a friend. Encourage someone. Take time to care. Let your words heal, not wound.” - Anonymous

Thursday, February 16, 2017 Seed of Forgiveness

Colossians 3:13 Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.

Reflection: Forgiveness is one of our core values at Crossroads. Most of the struggle, strife and war in the world today is because we do not know how to forgive. Whether it is an action that genuinely causes us injury, or the small slight that simply wounds our pride; we all find it hard to forgive. Often we pretend that some hurt doesn't matter, but pushing our feelings aside is not the same as forgiving. There are things that are so damaging to our lives that we see them as impossible to forgive. But, if we go into each day asking God to help us develop the desire to forgive, and the intention to forgive, this can lead us forward. Starting with small acts of forgiveness can help us learn to forgive greater offenses, and develop a greater desire to become forgiving people. We know that forgiveness is a spiritual practice, we practice it by sowing small seeds of forgiveness every day.

Sacred Pause: “Forgiveness is not an occasional act, it is a constant attitude.” - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Friday, February 17, 2017 Seeds of Service to Others

1 Peter 4:10 As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.

Reflection: This scripture encourages us to examine who we really are, to discover where we can be of the most use to the world. What unique qualities do you possess that could be used by God to change the world? Take some time to reflect on this. But also know that sometimes we are called to serve outside our comfort zone, our ability or even passion. All acts of service are good, both for us and for those we serve. Embrace simple acts of daily service, those that come easily and those that stretch you as they invite you to serve beyond what you think your gifts are. You will find that serving others is one of the greatest pathways to loving God, others and self more fully. Serving is transformational.

Sacred Pause: “The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.” - Mahatma Gandhi

Saturday, February 18, 2017 Seeds of Faith

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

Reflection: The Bible says faith is a gift from God. It allows us to move forward boldly even though we cannot see or understand what is ahead of us. This is faith. We plant seeds of faith when we take a risk and believe that the outcome will be good. We plant seeds of faith when we dream big and then trust that God will help us bring these dreams to reality. We live in a time when people are skeptical, but faith is the opposite of skepticism. It allows us to hope for the best in other people, hope for the best in ourselves, and hope that peace is possible. Love really can conquer all. Jesus' message was one of optimism for humanity and for the world. Faith allows us to be assured that Jesus' attitude can be our attitude as well.

Sacred Pause: "Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase." - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.