

## **The Lavish Sower**

**“A sower went out to sow”- How many times have you heard that story?**

**I've heard more sermons than I care to hear on what kind of soil we ought to be—**

**-mostly they just made me feel guilty because they didn't tell me what to do**

**about the rocks and weeds and briers in my own psyche-**

**It's one of the most famous parables Jesus told- is in all three of the synoptic gospels-**

**According to the accepted definition, parables are deceptively simple-**

**they seem to be easy to understand stories-**

**but upon close examination they're like riddles-**

**and you wonder whether you've got it right- or not.**

**This parable is no exception-**

**Some of the commentaries say this parable is about the Sower**

**- and some say it's about the Seed-**

**An initial quick reading does seem to say it's about the soil- but I'm not so sure.**

**Robert Capon, in *The Parables of the Kingdom* (Eerdmans, 1985) presents some**

**interesting thoughts: I think he's got it figured out.**

**This parable is the watershed of the parables. It's a turning point in Jesus ministry-**

**All three of the synoptics (Matt, MK and Lk) give it star billing.**

**With this parable Jesus' tone begins to change noticeably –**

**he begins to speak in parables about the Kingdom of God-**

**He knows the Kingdom is profoundly different than what the people have expected-**

**the Kingdom isn't a military state- it isn't an earthly kingdom-**

**It's a kingdom for everybody- not just the Jewish people.**

**And so Jesus begins to describe the Kingdom of God in ways that,**

**at a deep level, subvert the accepted ideas the people have about**

**what the Kingdom will be like.**

*(and in the verses that are left out of the reading we heard today*

*he tells the disciples- who don't understand the parable either-*

*why he's speaking as he does about the kingdom)-*

**Who do we usually identify as the sower ?...("a sower goes out to sow")-**

**We usually think of the sower as Jesus, don't we? –**

**and we think of him- and then ourselves as the church going around**

**sowing the Word of God in places that haven't received it.**

**Capon says that we've missed the point.**

**The Word of God- is Jesus himself-**

**-remember the beginning of the gospel of John.**

**"in the beginning was the Word.. and the Word was with God..**

**and the Word was God**

**...he came unto his own" ...**

**Jesus is the Word!**

**So- that says that the Sower is God the Father- not Jesus.**

**Jesus is the seed- Jesus is what was sown-**

**That puts a whole new light on the parable doesn't it!**

**Jesus has already- and literally- been sown- everywhere in the world.**

**Jesus- the Word- is here-**

**What are the implications of that?- well- think of what seeds are like-**

**They're not very big-**

**they seem to disappear once they're sown-**

**The thing that speaks to me the most is this:**

**A seed contains within itself everything it needs to become**

**what it's intended to be-**

**in other words- an acorn has, programmed into itself, a complete oak tree-**

**It needs water and sunlight to grow- but what it is, is within itself.**

**So, when we go back to the parable of the Sower-**

**we can say that Jesus has been sown in the world by God the Father-**

**the Kingdom of God is among us- Jesus said that many times.**

**The Kingdom of God is already here- has already been sown among us-**

**So- where are we in the story?**

**If we already have the Kingdom of God sown among us-**

**what's our task? Our call?**

**Here's my thought about that:**

**I have realized as I've gotten older that it seems that love is the key-**

**I'm called to love in each moment- each present moment.**

**It seems that when that happens, the Kingdom of God blooms around me.**

**Jesus last instructions to us were "Love one another as I have loved you"-**

**and I believe that, when we can love in that way,**

**the fruit of the Kingdom of God surrounds us.**

**Try it and you'll see the Kingdom bloom.**

**The Sower has already sown!**

*Amen.*