

## **That's One Powerful Projectile!**

[Texts - Isa. 55:8-13; Matt. 13:1-9; 18-23]

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Since the theme of yesterday's Retreat was *evangelism*, I decided to talk on the same topic today. This could be because I'm an exceptional steward of my time and resources; or maybe I'm just an exceptionally lazy preacher. The good news is, that regardless of my motivation - or yours - the Message that you and I carry and disseminate contains a tremendous potential for transforming people's lives. The word *evangelism* literally means "Good News!" And the heart of our Message is the good news of God's extravagant, all-inclusive, and everlasting love and grace. It's the same gracious love that called the Cosmos into being. It's same love and grace that Jesus Christ embodies and proclaims. And it's the same love and grace that inspires the genuine prophets and preachers, evangelists and teachers of every one of this world's credible Faith Communities.

In this morning's Old Testament Reading, the prophet Isaiah paints a intriguing picture of the tremendously potent nature of this Divine Expression of love and grace: "For as the rain and snow come down from heaven and do not return until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout...so shall My Word be that goes forth from My mouth. It shall not return to Me empty, but it shall accomplish what I intend, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it." What Isaiah indicates here, is that the Divine Word - by its very nature - contains an unstoppable, Life-giving force and function.

When you and I consider the Divine Word as a *living* entity - not confined in the words of sacred scripture, but as the vibrant expression of Divine energy and intention, we begin to understand how this Word can carry a Life-force of its own. Words

*do* have power! And words spoken with deliberate meaning and purpose are infused with the energy and authority of the one who expresses those words. In this regard, the Word [or Expression] of the Originating Source of all Energy, Matter and Life - must be pretty potent stuff! Therefore, that Word will never come-up empty; but in due time, it will fulfil the intended purpose of the One from whom it emanates.

Now, where this theological theory becomes intriguing and can actually make a difference in your life and mine, is when you and I figure-out what that Divine Word for us might be. Because as you and I align ourselves - and our words - with the Holy One and the Holy Word, we become increasingly aware of our own authentic purpose in this world. So...what might that Holy Word - that Divinely Expressed Purpose - be? There are probably infinite dimensions to that Word, and a myriad of ways in which It could be expressed. Yet I believe there is one particular focus which is absolutely critical, and universally dependable, when it comes to understanding the primary Divine Intention. In many different ways and places, the Scriptures reveal and affirm that "God is Love." And beyond that written Word, this is also the primary message conveyed through the person of Jesus Christ - the *Incarnate* Word - the Word made flesh.

The life and ministry of Jesus consistently shows us that the genuine nature and heart of the Holy One, is Pure and Perfect *Love!* And I imagine that most of us somehow sense that this is true. Therefore, as people seeking to live in harmony with the Holy One, the Word that we carry - the message that we live - is a word and message of Holy Love. Now, what this looks like - how we do this - will certainly vary. Primarily, however, Divine Love is revealed through our acts of kindness and patience, our goodness and generosity, our graciousness and our inner-peace. The opportunities for you and me to express and extend Divine Love unfold before us every day, and with every person we

encounter. And according to Jesus, each time you and I treat others with a Spirit of Divine Openness and Compassion, the end results *will* be positive and amazingly productive!

In the Parable of the Sower, Jesus reminds us that the reception of that good seed will vary, according to the condition of the soil. But that doesn't stop the sower from doing his or her part. The sower faithfully scatters that good seed upon the earth - trusting that it will take root, and grow, and be phenomenally productive. Of course, the sower has the advantage of assessing the soil by sight. She or he can at least aim for those fertile, receptive areas. But when it comes to spreading the Word of Divine Love, you and I can't determine how receptive others might be. Sometimes, those who seem to be the most hardened and callous, are actually the ones who are waiting and longing for a Word of Compassion and Grace. Sometimes, those who seem to completely ignore our *words*, will nevertheless be looking closely at our *lives*, and will see the Light of Divine Love and Grace shining through us. So in a way, you and I have the advantage of *not* knowing who will be receptive! This means that each person we meet can be the *perfect* person to offer our compassion and our care. How our efforts will effect their lives, is unpredictable - perhaps we may never even know the end results. However, in our *own* lives, the effect will be absolutely fantastic; because you and I will be living in harmony with our Divine Purpose - by faithfully sharing and showing Divine Love to others.

The bottom line is this: Our calling, is to faithfully communicate and manifest the Good News of Divine Love and Grace, wherever we may be. According to Jesus there is plenty of this Good News to go around, so you and I have no reason to hold back! In fact, the more we participate in sharing the Good News, and encourage one another in extending a gracious welcome to others, the easier our task becomes. Our Calling is to faithfully and freely disseminate Divine Love. The results which that Love

will ultimately produce, are completely up to God. Personally, I am perfectly O.K. with that arrangement!