

The Advantage of Not Knowing

[Texts -Isaiah 55:8-13;
Matthew 13:1-9; 18-23]

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In the Parable of the Sower and the Seed, Jesus reminds us that the productivity of the seed will vary, according to the condition of the soil. Some of the seed falls on the hardened path, and is devoured by birds; some lands on rocky ground, where it quickly sprouts, withers and dies; some begins to grow, only to be choked-off by prickly thorns. However [assuming that the sower has a better arm than recent Cleveland quarterbacks] most of that seed hits the fertile soil; where it take roots, and grows, and is tremendously productive. In this parable, the sower does have the advantage of being able to assess the soil by sight. He or she can at least *aim* for those more receptive, fertile areas of ground. But when it comes to dispensing and spreading the Divine Word to others, you and I can't determine how receptive those others might be.

Sometimes, people who seem to be the most hardened and callous individuals, will actually be the ones who are just waiting and longing for a word of hope and compassion. At times, those who seem to completely ignore our *words*, will nonetheless be looking at our *lives*; and can see the Light of Divine Love shining in us and 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 encouragement, compassion and care. How our efforts will effect their lives, is certainly unpredictable - perhaps we may never even know the end results. However, in our *own* lives, the effect will be absolutely certain; because you and I will be living in harmony with a Divine purpose - by faithfully sharing a Divine message, and showing a Divine Love to all those around us.

Speaking through the prophet Isaiah, the Holy One declares: "My word that goes forth from my mouth shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish what I intend, and succeed in the thing for which I

sent it!” According to that declaration, the Divine *Word* isn’t confined to the fixed *words* of Holy Scripture. It is a flowing, living Entity that carries a Life-force of its own. Words have power! And words spoken with a deliberate purpose and intention can convey the power and energy and authority of the source *behind* those words. Therefore, the Word [or the expressed intention] of the Originating Source of all Power and Energy, Matter and Life - whould be pretty potent stuff!

Now, where this theological concept becomes practical and meaningful, is when you and I discover what that Divine Word *for us* might be. Because as you and I strive to align ourselves and our words with the Holy One and the Holy Word, we begin to discover our authentic purpose in this world. Of course, there are many different dimensions to that Divine Word, and a wide variety of ways in which it might be expressed. Yet I believe there is one particular focus that is universally dependable, when it comes to understanding the Essential Divine Intention for our lives. In many ways, in numerous places, the Holy Scriptures reveal and affirm that “God is Love.” And in addition to that written Word, this is also the central message conveyed through the person of Jesus Christ - the *Incarante* Word - the Word made flesh - the quintessential embodiment of Divine Compassion, Grace and Peace.

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 would imagine that many of us, at certain times in our lives, have sensed the reality of this profound truth. Therefore, as people seeking to live in harmony with the Holy One, the Word we carry - the seed we spread - the message we embody and live - is a word and seed and message of Divine compassion and grace. Now, what this looks like - how we do this - will certainly vary. It can be expressed in our words of encouragement and support for those who are hurting and struggling, harassed and oppressed. It can be revealed in our kindness and patience, our goodness and generosity, our joyfulness and our inner-peace. The opportunities to express and extend Divine Love unfold before each of us every day, and in every situation we face.

In a little while, you and I will leave this place to scatter into the world. It's world that's fractured by hatred and violence, divisiveness and fear; yet a world that is waiting and longing for peace and wholeness, kindness and love. Our essential mission is to take the seed of the Living, Loving Word that we celebrate here, and freely scatter it among the fertile fields - *and* the hardened paths, the thorny situations, the rocky cracks and crevices - of our broken, yet beautiful world. We do so, trusting that this seed will take-hold, be fruitful, and multiply - sometimes in places and people we might least expect. Apparently, this seed is extremely potent stuff - able to produce thirty, sixty, or a hundredfold! And according to Jesus, there's plenty to spread around - so there's absolutely no need for you and me to ever hold-back!