

**18 November 2007, WW Evensong  
2nd before Advent, Trinity 25**

Daniel 6 (Lion's den)  
Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23 (Sower)

**Some disconnected observations on the parable**

**Look at the parable as a whole**

Gardening, agriculture, An everyday story of country folk. We might forget what a very ordinary example this would have been for Jesus' listeners. Everyday work likened to the kingdom of God. There is something here about God's kingdom being here in ordinary daily work, in the midst of ordinary life.

*George Herbert:*

*Teach me my God and king  
In all things thee to see*

*A servant with this clause  
makes drudgery divine:  
who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,  
makes that and the action fine.*

*John Keble: New every morning*

*If, on our daily course, our mind  
Be set to hallow all we find,  
New treasures still, of countless price,  
God will provide for sacrifice.*

*The trivial round, the common task,  
Will furnish all we ought to ask;  
Room to deny ourselves, a road  
To bring us daily nearer God.*

Finding god in daily life is fundamental Christian teaching. God became human to share in our experience and then, in the Ascension, to take his humanity and our humanity to heaven, divinized. God became man so that man might become God.

If we do not encounter God in the midst of daily life, where will we encounter him? God in all things.

And let's not be impatient, just steadily get on with it, as Daniel did, as the sower did. Live in the present, don't worry about the future.

I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope  
For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love,  
For love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith  
But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.  
Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought:  
So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing.

**Now think about interpreting some details of the parable of the sower**

**Let's imagine ourselves as the ground – the usual interpretation, with God as the sower.**

- We may be the path, seed snatched from us
- We may be rocky ground, seed does not take root.
- We may be thorny ground, and the way gets choked by thorns – the cares of the world, the worries, the distractions and deceitfulness of material things.
- We may be the good soil: we hear the word and understand it.

I never really noticed before this last bit – the need to understand it. That commits us to work, to effort, to intellectual study. We are required not merely to read, but to mark, learn and inwardly digest. The word needs to take root in our hearts and minds, and this requires, as in gardening, digging deep to prepare the ground.

What prepares us? Adversity, digging deep into ourselves to root out the weeds within, to let the light in so that our lights can shine out.

What do I need to do it? Courage, effort, energy, clear vision.

### **Now let's imagine ourselves as the seed**

- By witnessing to what is right, good, holy and true, we help to plant Jesus's message in the hearts and minds of those around us.
- What we say and do. Not gossiping, spreading rumours.
- Again a requirement to clean ourselves out.

Being ourselves, not pretending to be what we are not.

- We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It is not just in some of us; it is in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.
- This is not self-effacement, or fake humility. Humility is knowing where you stand with God: good and bad.

The need for selflessness was often taught to many of us as being the need for self-deprecation. This is not humility. If you express our full humanity as only you can do, you are letting your light so shine before others that ...

### **Now we can imagine ourselves as the sower**

- The sower scatters the seed. He does not choose to scatter it only on the ground he knows to be good, but he scatters it everywhere. Think of middle eastern landscape, or the Burren in Ireland.
- My experience with students – can never tell.
- Don't seek compliments, or look for results: JFDI.
- It's not up to us to choose where to sow. We scatter it everywhere.
- Something about the universality of the Christian message here. Is this universality mirrored in church congregations here in WW. From what I have seen I would say not.

### **What about you and me as the sower, helping prepare other ground**

The glory of God is in everyone

- Excluded from school, family, home, sleeping rough
- On drugs. Can't read and write. Guilt.
- Christ's message of liberation from guilt and addiction is for them. But wouldn't set foot in this place
- What have we done to put them off?
- How does the bulk of the population see us?
- Establishment

Let's do something for them. Hope 08.

Let's go into the lion's den.