

## Sermon Notes



**Series: Seeds**

**Sermon: Sowing Seeds**

### **Mark 4:1-9**

Again he began to teach beside the sea. Such a very large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat on the sea and sat there, while the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. He began to teach them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: “Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up quickly, since it had no depth of soil. And when the sun rose, it was scorched; and since it had no root, it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.” And he said, “Let anyone with ears to hear listen!”

**Monday: Read Genesis 12:1-3**

These verses are key to the rest of the story of Israel. God's call will be answered, and God's promise will be fulfilled. Blessings will flow from God and from these people. And although Abram will never see this future, his response shapes it. Verse 4 says, "So Abram went..." Each of us has that same call – to bless one another. Even if, like Abram, we will never see the fruit of that labor, we trust that God is at work in and through us. How are you like Abram? Who is God calling you to "bless?" In what ways can you offer a blessing to others?

*Prayer: Loving God, help me to see opportunities to be a blessing in the lives of my neighbors throughout the world.*

**Tuesday: Read James 3:13-18**

The harvest of our life's efforts is really no different than a crop of fruit or grain. Just as the effort of the grower and pickers is reflected in the harvest, so are the works of our life reflected in the fruits of our deeds. If we sow seeds of dissent in soil laden with envy and selfishness, our fruit will end up bruised and rotten. Conflict and disputes leave unsightly blemishes. We are called to live lives of service, peace, or, as James notes, "gentleness born of wisdom." The idea of craving power, ambition, or importance is definitely not part of the divine recipe. Instead, we are commanded to take a different approach, integrating servanthood and humility into our daily walk. In what ways do you need to sow seeds of gentleness, peace, and humility? How can you work with "gentleness born of wisdom?"

*Prayer: Gentle God, give me wisdom that seeks to share mercy and grace.*

**Wednesday: Read Leviticus 23:15-22**

The Feast of Weeks, also known as Pentecost because it follows Passover by 50 days, is a one-day celebration of rejoicing over the abundant gifts of food God has given in the harvest. Much like our own Thanksgiving celebrations, in The Feast of Pentecost, Israel gives thanks to God as provider and sustainer through offerings of the harvest. And then God reminds the Israelites to leave a portion of their fields for "the poor and alien." This might seem a foreign concept in our me-first, consumer driven culture, but it is an important reminder that our offering is not for our own benefit or to serve ourselves, but we give to God and God's purposes. In what ways do you share what you have with those less fortunate? Do you only offer your leftovers? How might you share the best of what you have?

*Prayer: Generous God, help me to offer more of myself and my resources for your work in this world.*

**Thursday: Read Malachi 3:6-10**

God's house—in those days, the temple—was the place from which the produce, the abundance of the land, was redistributed. Dereliction in fulfilling one's rightful "tithes" upset the harmony that alone could assure prosperity in the land. Careful guidelines had been established to ensure that everyone was cared for and restoration of this commitment would result in "overflowing blessing" for all. Generosity comes from an experience of "abundance," the blessing of which is literally lost unless shared with others, and impossible to gain alone.

*Prayer: Holy God, help me to share generously.*

**Friday: Read Matthew 14:13-21**

The disciples come to Jesus with a dilemma: There is not enough. Sound familiar? And then Jesus upends our conviction by feeding the five thousand with "nothing here but five loaves and two fish." Often thinking we don't have enough, we fail to see and take seriously what we already have. Scarcity is the fear that we won't have enough; this drives our culture, and the temptation is to hold on to what we have. But Jesus reminds us it is from what we have, not what we don't, that we find what we need...and then some! How might you "let go" in order to share from your abundance? What gifts might you share? What fear is holding you back?

*Prayer: Jesus, help me to trust that what I have to offer will be sufficient for your purpose.*

**Saturday: Read Psalm 24**

Today let this be your prayer:

"The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it."

What might it look like if every choice you made was grounded in an unreserved trust in God? How could you more faithfully embody God's loving life-giving purposes for "the world" and all who live in it?"

*Prayer: God of the earth, help us to live in faithful awareness that all life belongs to you.*