

FAITH AT HOME 2: WHERE DID THE SEEDS LAND?

Did you see any plants growing outside? Sometimes you can find plants which are growing through the pavement or road. Maybe you found a place where lots of weeds like thistles and stinging nettles are growing. Or perhaps you walked past a garden or an allotment where someone has carefully prepared the soil so that the plants can grow well.

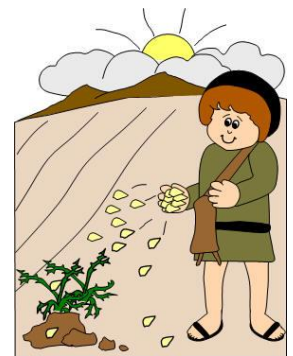


Plants growing might remind you of a story that Jesus told. You can read it in the Bible at Matthew 13:1-23, or you can read the story below:

(Image and some of words from DLTK Bible.com)

While Jesus was with his disciples and went around teaching all the crowds who came to hear him, he often spoke in parables. A parable isn't a true story, it's a story that Jesus made up to teach a lesson.

Jesus had gone out to sit by the lake by himself. Soon such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat near the shore and people stood on the land to hear him. Then he began telling them this parable:



A farmer went out to plant his field. In those days, farmers would walk up and down and throw the seed out of a bag until the field was covered. As he was throwing the seeds on the ground some fell on the hard path nearby and the birds came and ate them.

Some other seeds fell near rocks the farmer had collected in a pile nearby. There was not much soil around the rocks, so the seeds started to sprout and grow the next day. If seeds don't have enough soil, they don't grow proper roots. Every plant needs good roots so that it can get enough water to survive.

So, in the afternoon when the sun was very hot the little plants that started to grow among the rocks withered away and died because they had no root in the ground.

As the farmer continued to throw seeds onto the ground some of the seeds fell among the weeds and thorns that were growing round the edges of the field. The thorns grew faster and taller than the seeds, so the seeds couldn't get enough sunlight and didn't grow.

Finally, some seed fell on the good soil that the farmer had worked and dug well for the seed to go into. Those seeds made plants and those plants produced lots and lots of vegetables.

After Jesus told the parable the disciples asked what it meant. He knew that they would really listen and wanted to get to know him better so He told them what it meant.

The seed falling on the path is like people who hear God’s word but don’t understand it. The evil one comes and snatches away whatever they heard.

Some people listen to God’s word and respond straight away! But when problems come along, maybe people laugh at them or challenge them, they give up immediately. This is like the seed in the rocks which had no root.

For other people they have a lot of worries and problems in their lives, and like the seed in the thorns and weeds, God’s word isn’t able to grow because of all the other things they are anxious about.

But, some seed falls in the good soil. It grows roots and nothing gets in the way of it gradually producing a fantastic crop! This is the people who hear and understand God’s word and don’t let anything stop them living in God’s way and doing the things he wants us to do.

Talk about some of these questions:

- Do you ever not hear what someone says to you? If a grown up says, “Please tidy your room” and then says, “Would you like an ice cream?” do you think you would be more likely to hear one of these things than the other? Why might this be?
- Have you ever started something and then given up soon after? Why did you give up?
- If you’re doing some homework, do you ever get distracted and start doing something else instead? Why do you think this happens?

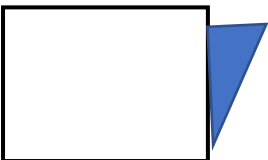
Here are three activities to try.

DRAW THE STORY

1. Find a piece of paper – it can be the back of a letter or note that nobody needs anymore (check first)

Find some pencils, crayons or felt pens – whatever you have at home.

Fold your paper in half, then in half again so that you have 4 quarters.



Now open your paper up – each quarter is going to show part of the story.

| | |
|---|---|
| A | B |
| C | D |

A) is where the birds eat the seeds which fall on the path. Have a look out of your window. Can you see any birds? What colours can you see on them? Draw a bird in A) You can draw a bird that you saw out of your window, or imagine a wonderful multicoloured bird! Show your bird eating some seeds which have fallen on the path.

B) Draw some rocks or stones, then draw a little plant growing between them. You can decide whether the plant has a flower or not!

C) Have you ever seen a prickly thistle, or maybe some stinging nettles? Draw a big prickly weed in C). You can decide what colour it will be!

D) Now think about vegetables that you like – can you draw some of your favourites growing in good soil?

THE THROWING CHALLENGE!

You will need some bowls or cups (plastic is best) and some small cubes or shapes – a duplo piece is good. If you want a real challenge and can find some cotton wool balls try throwing these! Decide which bowl or cup is going to be the GOOD SOIL. Put this bowl a little way away from you. Now the other bowls can go near to this one. One can be the path, one can be the rocks and one the weeds.

Each person has 10 throws. (Everyone else must stand behind and you can only throw underarm. – check there is nothing breakable nearby!)

Who go the most seeds in the GOOD SOIL bowl? Ask them what the good soil was in the parable.


If you get any in the other bowls, see if you can remember what happened to the seed that fell in these places.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN?

Jesus told this story about how we respond to God's words. Choose one of the speech bubbles and ask someone you're with if they ever feel like this? See if they can say which type of soil this statement reminds them of.




Sometimes I don't listen to God's words...




Sometimes I rush to start something for God, but then I give up.



Sometimes other things seem more important than God



Sometimes I wonder how we can hear God's



God wants me to good things for him.

Have a moment to be quiet and think about how you feel when you hear or read words from the Bible. Now pray this prayer, if you would like to:

Dear God,

Thank you that we can read your words in the Bible. Help us to be good soil and let your words make us more like you every day,

Amen