

Sow Jesus everywhere

Jeffrey's Bay is known for many things. It is known for good weather, for great waves to surf - and for its abundance of sea shells on the beach. The latter became a job creating resource. Some harvest the shells very early every morning. They sell it to people who clean them and then make beautiful ornaments to be sold to tourists. And then there are many, many, selling the final product. You meet them every day. They approach everyone. They do not skip a soul. They see a prospective customer in every car, and on every bench. They have tenacity and they are not shy. And I believe they have to be successful, for they never stop.

How great it would be if we Christians had the same persistence when offering Christ to the world. If we stopped thinking that we know who the people are who will respond to the good news, and who will not.

They make me think of the well known parable that Jesus told, and explained, about the sower and the seed, in Matthew 13. This story is about the fact that we are all different kinds of soil in the receiving of the Word of God. It also teaches us something very important about the one who sows.

According to this parable Jesus knew that there are some people who are like the soil on a hard path. The Word hardly gets there, and it is gone. They don't seem to have the ability to respond to the Word of God.

Some of the seed falls on shallow soil. The parable is talking here about shallow people. You know you're shallow when you only have two items on the agenda: pleasant and unpleasant, what I like to do and what I don't like to do. I avoid what I don't like to do, and I do what I like to do. That is shallow. Shallow is someone who never reads anything spiritual, never contemplates anything or responds in any way to God's Word. There is not going to be any fruit for God's cause in their lives.

Sometimes the Word of God falls among the weeds. These are people who are too busy to fruitfully absorb the Word. There are too many plants in their lives. They have said yes to too many things. They had a sense of priorities once, but they lost the list, and now it is a matter of only doing something where the most pressure is felt. They never really take time to nourish their spirit, to pray, to read Scripture, to think about life and relationships, to pause and thank God for his blessings and to worship God with his people. There is some fruit in their lives, but it is deprived and undeveloped. It cannot nourish anyone.

Then there is the good soil. These are the genuine, truly humble, serving Christians. They live in the same world as others, have the same friends, work at the same places, yet there is something different about them. They love, they care, they go, they do, and they give. And if you were to list all the good things they do, they would be embarrassed.

What made them so different? It is in taking time to attend to their spiritual life and to God. They nourish their relationship with God. They feed it, talk to their souls about it, praying about being good soil. Attending to God's Word nourishes, grows your relationship with Jesus and determines who you are. It makes the seed grow 30, 60 and 100 fold.

But this parable is about more than who we are. It is also about Jesus, the sower who tells us in this parable that in his ministry he scattered the seed on every kind of soil. He did not only sow on good soil. He tells us that he gave each and everyone the chance to receive the seed and the chance to let it grow.

It would be a terrible mistake to give up on people, because we decided that they were too hard, too shallow or too busy to receive the Word! The fact is that we do not know whether there will be any growth. So let us not be selective. Indiscriminately scatter the Word of God and do not try to predict what the result will be, because we do not know.

It is Christ sowing the seed through you and me. And we do not know where the seed will grow. All we know is that we believe that people can change by the power of God's Spirit.

You do not have to trust your own gift of sowing. Trust the seed, which is nothing less than Christ given to people by the Holy Spirit. He is given to you, your family, your husband, your wife, your parents, your children, your friend and your neighbour.

If you believe that, you will be blessed as you remain busy with God's farming. Persistently sow Jesus everywhere. *Approach everyone. Do not skip a soul. See a prospective Christian in every car, and on every bench. Have tenacity and don't be shy.* And God will carry on using his church to save the world.