

The Generous Sower: Two farmers went out to sow some seeds,
a modern day parable inspired by
II Corinthians 9:6-8
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Broadway Christian Church

M: Two farmers went out to sow some seeds in the garden called Kingdom.

T: They were hoping for fruits of the Spirit that would be the Harvest of God.

M: The fields were ripe in the world
Both: and the laborers were ready.

M: But the bushel basket was empty.

T: Michael, why is our basket empty?

M: It's not empty, look here, all the seeds are ready and waiting.

T: That's right, and we are waiting, waiting,

M: Waiting,

T: For the **conditions** to be right.

M: Right amount of rain...

T: Enough sunshine...

M: The good earth...

M: So what we are confessing is that we have not even planted our plot of the Kingdom garden yet.

T: Waiting not only on conditions, but **fears**:

M: Afraid of rocks. (*Seed withers and will die*)

T: Afraid of weeds. (Seeds choked out)

M: And also that actually sowing the seed would mean we might not have enough for later to start again.

T: That's a real fear. Scarcity of seed!

M: Oh, it's real.

Terry: Before we plant, all fears have to be overcome.

Both: Don't they?

M: We are also waiting for time enough for the **tending!**

T: Sowing these seeds means we would take responsibility to tend them.

M: Responsibility...that's a scary thought.

T: We can't trust them to another.

Both: Can we?

T: So bottom line is we have nothing to offer this year.

M: It's a bummer crop.

T: Not only that, but look at these seven seed packets, they have expiration dates.

M: Well they do, most of the seeds will not be viable within 1 to 5 years. They are going to rot while we do nothing.

T: We need to give the seed a chance to do its work. I don't want this (empty basket) to happen ever again.

M: Neither do I. So let's look at the directions of the seeds.

T: Follow directions, now there's an idea.

M: What seeds did you buy for the spring?

T: I bought a whole packet of **Love**.

M: Love? Doesn't that seem a little risky? I'm not sure if you've looked around lately, but love isn't growing as plentiful as it used to.

T: Even more reason to plant it.

M: Are you sure this is a smart move? Did you even read the warning label on those seeds?

T: Why of course I did!

M: What does it say then?

T: It says, "Planting these seeds may result in an exposure of your vulnerability. May lead to a broken heart, a weakened spirit, and feelings of betrayal, rejection and hopelessness. Plant at your own risk."

M: And you think it's a good idea to plant this?

T: I think it's the perfect idea. Plant it deep in the soil, past the hate we see in the world and let it grow.

M: But what happens if it doesn't?

T: What happens if it does? What happens if love becomes plentiful? If the fruit of love grows with reckless abandon until we all have enough? Until the dark haze of hate is eclipsed by the shining light of love?

M: Well that sounds like a Kingdom garden, my friend.

T: What are you planting?

M: I found these wonderful seeds of **Joy** for the spring.

T: Joy? That's what you've decided is going to turn your harvest around?

M: Seems like the most appropriate choice to me.

T: You must not have read the warnings on the packet then. I imagine that they are severe to say the least.

M: Just the opposite, they say, "Planting these seeds may result in looking foolishly optimistic. May lead to appearing disingenuous, and potentially exhausting your reserves of joy. Plant at your own risk."

T: Are you sure this is a smart move?

M: I most certainly do. Plant it deep, past the weeds of sorrow and pain, and let it grow.

T: But what happens if it doesn't?

M: What happens if it does? What happens if joy becomes accessible? If the fruit of joy grows with on every tree until no sorrow can contain the joy we feel? Until the hope of tomorrow shines brighter than the pain of today?

T: Well that sounds like a Kingdom garden, my friend.

M: What other seeds did you find for spring?

T: I looked and looked and I finally found some seeds of **Peace**.

M: Really? Are those even still around?

T: Oh yes! It took me awhile but I discovered a couple.

M: When's that last time you saw peace fruit around? We've been at war since the beginning of time.

T: Even more of a reason to plant it, we need it.

M: Tell me about the warning label. I imagine it strongly advises you not to do this.

T: Not quite, it says, "Planting these seeds may result sitting out. May lead to

frustration and anger, and feelings of powerlessness and a loss of hope. Plant at your own risk."

M: Doesn't sound like the greatest idea.

T: Actually it seems a splendid idea. Plant it deep, beyond the strife we find all around us, and let it grow.

M: But what happens if it doesn't?

T: What happens if it does? What happens if peace reigns in abundance? If the fruit of peace grows in the fields of every heart until it becomes inexhaustible? Until the brokenness of strife is forever healed by the power of peace?

M: Well that sounds like a Kingdom garden, my friend.

T: What else do you intend on planting this spring?

M: I found some seeds of **Patience** from many harvests ago that I think I may try.

T: Tell me your joking? Patience? Today?

M: Nope, I'm not joking.

T: There's not a lot of patience growing out there, you think it'll take?

M: I see no reason why it wouldn't.

T: What about the warnings? What do they say?

M: They say, "Planting these seeds may result in getting trampled on or losing your place. May lead to feeling lost or passed by and fears of missed opportunity. Plant at your own risk."

T: Seems like quite a risky decision, doesn't it?

M: It seems like a necessary decision. Plant it deep, avoiding those weeds of impatience that are sprouting up beneath us and let it grow.

T: But what if it doesn't?

M: What happens if it does? What happens if patience becomes the norm? If the fruit of patience grows within us until it becomes a part of our nature? Until the first one to speak becomes the first one to listen?

T: Well that sounds like a Kingdom garden, my friend.

M: What else do you intend on planting this Spring?

T: I think I may finally plant some seeds of **Kindness.**

M: Kindness? Good luck with that one in these days of meanness.

T: Even more reason to plant them.

M: But the warning label clearly advises against this right?

T: Not explicitly, it says, "Planting these seeds may result in exposure to criticism. May lead to looking weak and docile and as though you wouldn't stand up for yourself. Plant at your own risk."

M: Isn't that potentially dangerous?

T: Not at all. Plant it deep, beyond the harshness of the world and let it grow.

M: But what happens if it doesn't grow?

T: What happens if it does? What happens if kindness is all we know? If the fruit of kindness grows in abundance to become the epitome of who we are? Until every expression we make becomes cloaked in the warmth of kindness?

M: Well that sounds like a Kingdom garden, my friend.

T: Anything else going in your harvest this year?

M: If nothing else, I'm planting seeds of **Faithfulness** this season.

T: You're doing what?!

M: Planting seeds of Faithfulness.

T: What could possibly make you think that would work? Faithfulness? Not a chance.

M: Something has to grow in the stead of all this doubt we feel.

T: But what about all the warnings? What do they say?

M: They say, "Planting these seeds may result in an accentuation of your doubts and insecurities. May lead to questioning and

feelings of fear and failure. Plant at your own risk."

T: Are you sure this is going to work?

M: No, but if I'll plant them deep, way past the fears that have taken root and let them grow.

T: But what happens if it doesn't grow?

M: What happens if it does? What happens if faithfulness becomes the expression of our love? If the fruit of faithfulness stirs a hope in us that burns brighter than ever? If the tree of faith grows larger than the shadow of doubt?

T: Well that sounds like a Kingdom garden, my friend.

M: What's the last seed in your harvest?

T: It ought to be **Self-control**.

M: Really? Why self-control? It seems as though that's out of season.

T: It's the fruit that keeps on giving.

M: What does the warning label say?

T: It says, "Planting these seeds may result in missed opportunities. May lead to feeling left out and unheard and loss of **ego**."

M: That's a bit sketchy don't you think?

T: Not even a little. Plant it deep, past our impulsivity and let it grow.

M: But what happens if it doesn't grow?

T: What happens if it does? What happens if self-control tempers our need to be right?

T: If the fruit of self-control stirs a strength in us that resists the call of our ego? If the loudest voice in the room becomes the most reasonable voice?

M: Well that sounds like a Kingdom garden, my friend.

M: Why do sow these risky seeds?

T: Why lean into our fears?

Both: "Silent growth while we are sleeping, future needs in Earth's safe keeping."

M: We need these fruits to sustain us, now and tomorrow and generations from now.

T: Plant them deep, beyond the reach of our human wants, deep in the heart of God, and watch them grow.

M: For God so loved the world that God gave.....and gave.....and gave....

T: If we watch for the conditions of our hearts and of the world to be just right for sowing the seeds of God's Spirit...

Both: WE WILL PLANT RIGHT NOW.

M: The fields are ripe in the world.
Conditions are good!

T: The seeds are viable this year! **Fear** has an expiration date too.

M: And we are the laborers, who together, make sure the seeds are scattered and sown and **tended**.

T: Not only do we take responsibility for sowing...

M: Responsibility, still a scary thought...

T: We also really trust what we can't see in the miracle of the seed.

M: God's partnership underground:

T: The seed's brokenness is the first sign of the rooting...

M: Oh, that's deep.

T: We need to partner with the future and with others, like Warren and his grandsons with twenty tiny trees (Reference to Stewardship video).

M: The planting itself will bear fruit.

T: So if we are waiting to plant for fear of poor conditions or scarcity of seed...**sow in poor conditions and scarcity!**

M: Somebody's got to do it... (Looking out at the congregation)

Both: The Generous Sowers!

(Handing out the packets) Who will sow Love? Joy? Peace? Patience? Kindness? Faithfulness? Self-control?

**Both: (singing) Seed Scattered and Sown.
Wheat gathered and grown, bread
broken and shared as one, the living
bread of God. Vine, fruit of the land.
Wine work of our hands. One cup that is
shared by one, the living cup, the living
bread of God. –Dan Feiten**

Amen? Amen.