



THE STORY OF THE SOWER

Do you know that Jesus was the most amazing story-teller. Jesus loved telling stories. And all the people who went to listen to him loved hearing his stories. And I want to tell you one of Jesus' stories: but I need your help. Are you going to help me? OK.

He was talking to lots and lots of people, about a man who went out to sow some seeds. But he didn't get cotton wool, and tissue and sprinkle it with water and put the seeds on, just like you've just done: he had a great big field to cover! Because in Jesus' time they hadn't invented tractors and other machines he had to do it all by himself. He went out, and he had a big bag stuck to his waist, and he put his hand in the bag and he picked up a handful of seeds and he went like this, and he threw them on his left side, and he took a step forward and he picked another handful of seeds and threw them to his right side. And he walked up and down his field throwing the seeds on the ground as he went. Now what I want you to do, is to pretend to be the seeds. Now what you're going to do is mime; now mime means acting with no words. So you've got to have your mouth closed, and your ears open so you can listen to me so you know what you've got to do. I want you to curl up tight in a little ball because you're a seed. That's right, you're the seeds, and you've just landed on the ground because the farmer has thrown you out of his bag and onto the ground. Now, the first lot of seeds fell on the path, and it was all hard; there was no way they could put roots down into that soil because it was rock hard. And so what happened was that the birds came and ate the seed like they do when they come onto your bird table in your garden. So when the birds come and touch you gently on your head, I want you to turn over onto your back and wave your feet in the air because you are dead, and the birds have eaten you. Alright, so here come the birds and they're going to eat up the seed, and when you get touched turn over and waive your legs in the air. That was brilliant. Well done.

So that was no good, as none of those seeds grew at all. But the next lot of seeds; curl up and be a seed again; the next lot of seeds fell on some ground where there were lots and lots of stones. So there was a little bit of soil, but there wasn't very much soil, because there were lots of stones as well. So they started to put down roots, and they started to grow. Can you start to grow, just a little bit. But the roots don't go down very far because of the stones so when the sun comes out, you get hotter and hotter and hotter and you go all wilted and fall back down on the ground because you can't grow any more, you can't get any more water.

So that was no good. Right, curl up and be another seed. The next lot of seeds fell where there were some thorns, and some thistles, and nettles and weeds. But there was plenty of soil so they were great. They put their roots down, and they started to grow, and they were quite strong. Can you grow, you're quite strong – I think you can probably stand up. But in the middle with all the seeds that were growing, all the weeds were growing as well. And they got so that they were all surrounded by the weeds and they all got choked up and they couldn't carry on growing because the

weeds were taking all of the light and all of the water and they all had to fall back down to the ground because they were no good.

And now the very last lot of seeds, curl up and be a seed again, the very last group of seeds fell on some really, really good soil that was just ready for plants to grow. And there were no stones, and there were no birds, and there were no thistles. And so they started to grow, they put down their roots, and they grew up big and tall and strong and they opened their leaves and the leaves soaked up all the warmth from the sun. And eventually, they produced lots and lots of more seeds. Wow! That's absolutely brilliant!

Well done, now sit down. Now some of the people who were listening to Jesus thought "that's a very funny story. I don't know what all that meant." But his friends, they went and found Jesus and they said "That's a really good story; can you tell us what it meant?" And so Jesus said, "Alright then, I'll tell you. The seed is the message that God loves you and He wants to be your friend. Some people hear that message and they say 'What? I don't think I was really listening. No, I can't be bothered; I'm not interested.' And so that seed is like being eaten up by the birds and it never starts to grow at all because they just don't even want to listen. And some people, they hear this message that God loves them, and wants to be their friend and they go "Yeah! God loves me!" But then when something bad happens, instead of thinking I need to ask God for help here, they think "Huh! Well, that just proves that that's not true, God doesn't love me at all." And so they give up and that's a bit like the stones, where the seeds grow up, and when it gets too hot they just give up. And some people are a bit like the soil where all the weeds are. They hear the message and they go "Yeah! God loves me, I believe this. I really want to follow Jesus!" And then someone says to them "Don't go to Razzmatazz, come round to my house and play computer games." or "Don't read your Bible, come out with me and do some shopping." And they think, "Yes, I can do that another day." And so all the other things get in the way and choke them up and they get interested in all these other things and they forget to be interested in what God says. But some people are like the soil that's ready to hear God's message and they go "Yeah! God loves me: I believe this. I really want Him to forgive me and be my friend. I'm going to follow Jesus, and I'm going to read my Bible, and I'm going to pray, and I'm going to go to Razzmatazz and Sunday Club, and I'm going to tell my friends about Jesus." And they're the ones that are like the seeds that grew up big and strong and made more seeds, because you get to tell the message to other people. And that's what Jesus' story was all about.

Liz Platt