

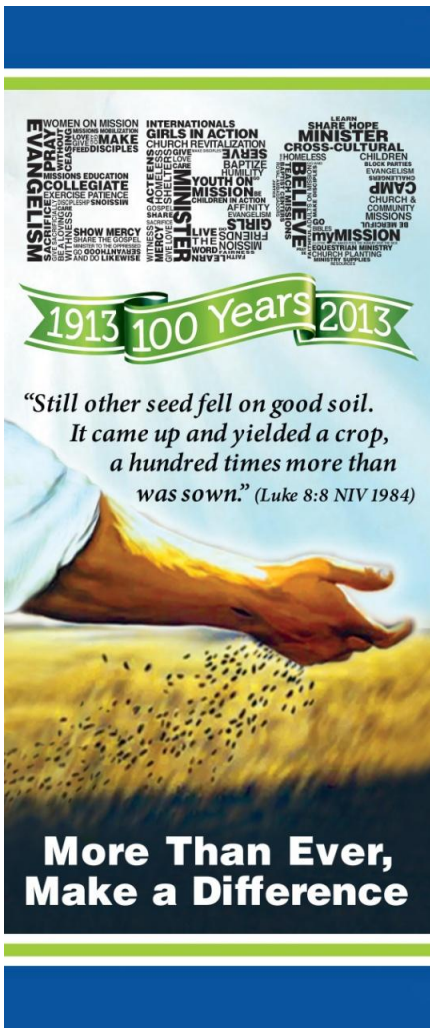
State Missions Sermon

More Than Ever, Make a Difference

Luke 8:4-11

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In 2000 Malcolm Gladwell published a book entitled **Tipping Point, Little Things That Makes Big Differences**. The theme of the book was simple: it is the little things in life that can make the big differences in the world. For example, Gladwell examined how fixing broken windows in New York City made a difference in the dropping of the city's crime rate. Little things make big differences.

It is like the story of "For want of a nail."
*For want of a nail the shoe was lost.
For want of a shoe the horse was lost.
For want of a horse the rider was lost.
For want of a rider the message was lost.
For want of a message the battle was lost.
For want of a battle the kingdom was lost.
And all for the want of a horseshoe nail.*

The moral of the story is a kingdom was lost because of a single nail. There is power in the small things. Throughout the Word of God we see God using small insignificant things to make a big difference in the world.

God took a small bush in the desert and showed Moses how to free his people.
God took the small red rope and saved Rahab and her entire family
God took a small stone, and with it David killed Goliath.
God took a small boy with a small meal and fed 5,000 men.

There is power in the small.

In Luke 8 Jesus told a parable of a man sowing seeds. Seeds are very small things, but what a big difference they make when planted in the right place.

The parable is a simple story about a farmer sowing seeds. As he was scattering the seeds, some fell along a hardened path, and the birds came and ate them. Some of the seeds fell on rocky ground and came up quickly, but because the soil was shallow when the sun came up, the plants withered because they had no root. Other seeds fell among thorns, and when the thorns grew up they choked the plants. The last group of seeds fell on some good soil, where they produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.

Jesus explains the parable and it contains three parts: the sower, the soil and the seed

The Sower is the one who sends out the seed.

The Soil is the picture of a person's heart.

The Seed is the picture of God's Word.

THE SOWER

The sower is the one who takes the seed and spreads it. Literally the farmer in this parable “cast out” or “broadcast” his seed. Farmers in those days had a pouch around their necks and would throw handfuls of seed in every direction. They understood that a certain amount of seed would fall on ground where it would not take root. However, the farmer’s job was to cast out as much seed as he could in order that a lot of seed would take root. His job was not to evaluate or contemplate the potential soil, but simply to cast out the seed.

THE SOIL

In the parable we find four types of soil.

1. Hard Ground

In Palestine as people walked they made a footpath and over time their footpath would be hard like concrete. This was ground that was not tilled or cultivated and when seed landed there it simply stayed on top of the ground. Notice what happens - as soon as the seed drops on the ground the birds of the air go after it.

Jesus said this is the person that has a callous heart and is not ready to hear the message and when the message comes the devil immediately attacks.

2. Stony Ground

In Palestine not only was there are a lot of rocks in the area but there was some ground with a thin layer of good soil over limestone. Seed would land in that soil and begin to sprout but the root did not take hold because of the rocks. It looked like it was growing but it had not taken root.

Jesus said this is the person that hears the message but they have a casual heart. They hear the message, but it doesn’t take root in their lives.

3. Thorny Ground

This ground is not what we would consider thorns, but it fell into what we would call weeded area. The seed fell with the weeds and as they grew the weeds which grows faster chokes the good seed.

Jesus said this person hears the message but they have a crowded heart. There are too many distractions for the seed to take root and to grow.

4. Good Ground

This is the person who has a committed heart. They hear and accept the message and they produce much fruit.

THE SEED

Jesus tells us plainly what the seed is in Luke 8:11, "The seed is the word of God." The seed is not good works, or good effort but the Word of God. The Word of God is the only thing that can change the human heart.

In the parable Jesus says there is nothing wrong with the seed. The same seed that the birds eat is the same seed that produces a good crop. And it’s the same seed that produces a plant that withers away or gets choked by the thorns. The issue is never with the seed, but where it is planted.

Kentucky Baptists, our job to make a difference, more than ever, is to be like the sower and broadcast the message everywhere.

TWO KEY LESSONS ON MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

1. To make a difference we need to go and sow

How can we make a difference? The greatest way we can make a difference is to proclaim the message of Jesus Christ. Dr. George W. Truett said, "The bringing of one soul to Jesus is the highest achievement possible to human life."

We are to sow the Gospel with every opportunity we are given. In Kentucky we are blessed with many mission opportunities and with each one we need to sow the seed of the word of God. Wherever we go or whatever we do, we are to tell the message.

The ministry of Kentucky Changers is more than community development projects; it is to sow the seed of the Word. The ministry of the High Mountain Equine Outreach is more than a ministry involving horses and at-risk youth; it is to sow the seed of the Word.

We are to sow the word. How?

- We Must Sow Plentifully.

“But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.” (2 Corinthians 9:6)

The sower is scattering the seed as far and wide as he can. The bigger crop you want the more you sow. Kentucky Baptists, if we want a huge harvest, we must sow more.

- We Must Sow Patiently.

“Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.” (Galatians 6:9)

We cannot be discouraged in our witnessing and our working. Our job is to sow the seed and trust God. Our job is to sow the seed, and trust God where it lands.

2. To make a difference we need to know God grows what we sow

It is never about our efforts, but about the faithfulness of God. It is about God, not about us. God uses what we sow. Paul said “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” (Galatians 6:7) Therefore if we sow the Word, then God will bless the Word.

And the result of his blessing? In Luke 8:8 we see the results of God blessing His Word that we sow. It grows beyond what people expect. Most people in Jesus day stated that a seed produce thirty-fold, but here it is a hundred fold. God’s Word grows because it has power and life in it.

Natural seeds have power in them. Have you ever seen grass breaking through concrete or a sidewalk? Why? That seed has been growing and growing and over time can make a crack larger and larger until it breaks through. There is power in that seed.

Archeologists have planted seeds found in Egyptian tombs to have them grow after thousands of years of being dormant. Why? There is life in the seeds.

God’s Word has power and life in it and we are to trust God to grow what we sow. Remember Jesus makes no distinction between the sower or the seed; but it is the soil that he focuses on to show us the difference. We don’t need to defend the seed, we need to dispense the seed.

Do you want to make a difference in the world for Christ more than ever? Then sow God’s Word in everything you do.

God desires that we make a difference in the world and all of us were created for a purpose and a reason. The right soil, with the right seed, cast by the sower will make a big difference in the world.

Let us **more than ever, make a difference.**