

The crowd gathers around Jesus

In their desire to hear they push closer and closer to Jesus—until he got in a boat  
where he sat down and taught them—as Rabbi's do when they are teaching  
He told them a parable

A farmer throws seed on the ground and it lands on various kinds of soil

1. Path—birds ate the seed
2. Gravel/rocky ground—sprouts quickly but dies in the sun due to lack of roots
3. Thorns/weeds—new growth is strangled by the weeds
4. Good earth—the seed grows and the harvest was good, even excellent

Question—was it intentional to throw the seed on ground where it wouldn't grow well?  
Some scholars say that it was common to sow seed, then rake or plow the ground  
Others say seed is sown by the broadcast method—but only on fertile soil

This is what one would expect

So that seed is sown in the fertile areas with minimal seed on poor ground

Interesting that there is no discussion of the plowing in this story

It's like Jesus left it out intentionally

First—to our surprise—Jesus does throw the seed everywhere

The seed is the good news—the gospel—the kingdom of God

Jesus throws it everywhere without regard for the kind of soil—

There is no preferential treatment—getting God's kingdom to the receptive only

Or getting God to the good folks, or those who've proven worthy

The seed lands as it lands

...it rains on the just and the unjust

...God comes to the just and the unjust

We have all known the truth of God coming—even when we were rocky and distracted

Every one of us has experienced all these different kinds of soil

We may be good soil one day, but thorny, rocky, or hard another

For many of us, the surprise is that God still comes when we are not at our best

Road or path—God comes but it doesn't soak in to our being

God sits there, waiting, but we can't or don't connect with God

Sometimes we know God is present, but we can't touch God, so it feels hopeless

Then the moment passes—it evaporates—it feels like God abandoned us

Gravel or rocky ground—God comes, and we receive God with joy

But the emotional high leaves and it's gone

Like the high at camp that disappears when home

Life happens and next thing we know God is gone and we've moved on

Weeds and thorns—God comes and takes root  
But all the stuff of life grows taller and faster  
Worry about life, work, pressure, difficulties, relationships, expectations...  
Even pursuit of the good life  
It all crowds out God

Good soil—God comes and takes root—God produces an abundant harvest  
God's life-giving spirit fills us and creates life beyond our wildest dreams

Wonderful that God comes no matter how receptive we are or have been  
Even when it makes no sense—God comes  
Jesus sows the seed all over the place all the time—even against farming practices  
Even against reasonable, logical, good sense  
It's like the Sower in the parable is constantly sowing seed, again and again  
Jesus nudges/jostles/prods us  
BUT Jesus NEVER forces us  
Jesus doesn't "plow us"—that's more invasive  
Jesus is never invasive until we are ready  
Jesus is content to come again and again and wait for us

But I also think it is a challenge for us to let the soil take in nourishment  
Let the rain fall on the soil—let it permeate the soil  
Allow God to permeate through our defenses—soak into our being

BE vs. DO—letting God soak into our being  
We are human beings—not human doings  
**Be in God, rather than do God, or do for God**  
Let any **doing** come naturally out of our **being**

The harvest is good—some is 30-fold, some is 60-fold, some is 100-fold  
The miracle that God produces in us is good, no matter how large  
We often expect that even with God's help, our harvest will be limited  
With God the harvest isn't limited to expectations—it is God's miracle unfolding

Contrary to common thought—the harvest isn't more baby Christians  
The seed isn't a baby Christian that grows to maturity  
The seed is the kingdom of God planted in us  
Harvest is the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22  
God produces harvest that's incredible  
The wonder that God produces in our lives is astounding

God's seed is deep within us, making us who we are—re-creating us in God's image  
A harvest of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control