



Stepping Stones

Matthew 13:1-9 New Revised Standard Version

¹That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. ²Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. ³And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. ⁴And as he sowed, some seeds fell on a path, and the birds came and ate them up. ⁵Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. ⁶But when the sun rose, they were scorched, and since they had no root, they withered away. ⁷Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. ⁸Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹If you have ears, hear!"

Notes:



"A farmer does not grow crops. A farmer creates an environment where crops can grow." Unknown

With a sack of seed over his shoulder and hope in his heart, he traversed the field. Handfuls of seed fell here and there as he anticipated what their future might hold. It is the kind of story which draws us in causing us to walk right along side of the farmer. The experience is one with which we are quite familiar living as we do in a rural community. That is also what made many of Jesus' parables relatable to his hearers long ago. Many in Galilee made their living off of the land and the very illustration used by Jesus may have been one which he observed firsthand growing up in the region as well as by traveling its landscape.

While it has come to be known by most as the "Parable of the Sower," a careful reading quickly brings to light a story which is about more than a farmer and his seed. It is the story of the earth (human hearts) and their reception of the seed as it was being broadcast. The farmer/sower disappears from focus after verse three and attention is given to the types of ground and what became of the seed after the farmer had done his part. The surprise of the parable comes when one considers the liberality with which the farmer sowed, the diverse outcomes of his labor, and the miracle of a harvest which can best be described as a work of grace. Remember:

- 1. The Kingdom needs a life-giving environment to grow.**
- 2. A shallow commitment will not produce long-term maturity.**
- 3. Feeding the wrong things has a nutrient-robbing effect.**

Prayer Pebble: Lord, soften my heart and remove anything which may hinder the development of your Kingdom in my life. Amen.