

Pentecost 5, 13/7/2014, Holy Trinity, Terrigal

Matthew 13:1-23

“A sower went out to sow, and as he sowed...”

This was a very familiar earthy image that would have been an ordinary part of daily life in the area in which Jesus was carrying out his ministry.

This was a person who knew what he was doing in scattering seed.

The seed goes where it is supposed to go, no soil is left bare: it is evenly scattered for germination.

Yet, even with such skill the sower still manages to land some seed on the road, or on stones, or among thorns.

The seeds that fall on the road, or on stones, or among thorns do not produce a harvest.

This parable, coming from Jesus' lips seems to infer that, despite setbacks God's kingdom would come and surprise us with its overwhelmingly rich harvest.

It also implies that setbacks are normal.

This is the reality for you and me in our backyard or front yard gardens.

The prospect of suffering is real: the prospect of failure is real.

Or as a grazier said to me a long time ago: “Wherever there are livestock there will be troubles and deaths.”

But does this prospect deter us from doing these things? For the most part, the answer is “NO”.

We carry on, looking for the harvest.

This concept from the lips of Jesus displays the hallmarks of the early church.

The apostles were called to form a community and to go on mission.

Wherever they went apostles, like Paul and Barnabas, Peter and Andrew, Matthew and John, Thomas and James formed a community of fellow Christians who heard the apostles' teaching, joined in the fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Some of the people in these communities fell short of expectation and left in one way and another.

On the other hand, many of these communities thrived with many new Christians joining them.

Truly the harvest was huge.

This is part of the contrast we have in this Gospel reading.

As we continue to form a community of Christians in this place we are aware of the number of failed and disappointing experiences that come our way.

These are represented by the loss of the seeds that fall on the road, or on stones, or among thorns.

The contrast comes when we become aware of the harvest that comes our way with new Christians and new enquirers about the Christian Faith and the freedom that Christ brings.

This makes us forget the negative experiences of the losses and makes us more determined to go on mission, proclaiming the good news of God in Jesus among the people whom we meet.

This brings me to ask some questions of ourselves as a church community.

Which soil does our church community represent?

If we are to be the good soil that produces a huge harvest we need to be good listeners to the world around us.

Then we need to know how to communicate in a new way the person of Jesus and the values of the Gospel.

We need to be confident, eager and tireless in our evangelising even in what seem to be impossible circumstances to communicate the Gospel.

As we look at the Parable of the Sower be aware of the time difference between the sowing of the seed with the loss of some of the seed and the great harvest.

Finally, we are to seriously examine ourselves as the church community meeting in this place in the light of the Parable of the Sower and the kind of soil that we represent.

We are aware of the ups and downs of our life together and in our attempts to proclaim the Gospel of our Lord, Jesus Christ to others of the freedom that Christ brings.

As we examine ourselves and our corporate life in this way we remember "God is with us ALWAYS."