

15th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A

Isaiah 55:10-11

Psalms 65: 10, 11, 12-13, 14

Romans 8:18-23

Matthew 13:1-23

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It's probably inevitable. You hear the Parable of the Sower in our Gospel today and you wonder, "Am I a good seed – the kind that yields a hundredfold?" Yes, you are. Oh, you may not be able to make a free throw to save your life, and you may not be able to do quadratic equations, but you have an enormous gift for what God intended you to do. You have a genius for loving God and your neighbor. It's your nature. Salt is salty, fish swim, and you love. It's what you are for. Remember that YouTube moment when Susan Boyle opened her mouth and began to sing and stunned the room? That's you when you start to love. I don't know, you might be an unprepossessing, easily overlooked little seed, but when it comes to loving, you are world class, because ultimately, it is Christ loving in you.

But, you may ask, "Even if I'm a good seed, am I planted in good soil? Maybe I've been sown in rocky ground, or among thorns." Now it might be that at the moment there are some destructive circumstances in your life that need to change, but remember the big picture. The big picture is that God loves you and has a special providential plan for you, tailored to your thriving. If you say "yes" to the plan, if you love where you are planted, your life will achieve the end that God intends. And God's intentions for you are wonderful beyond imagining.

The real danger is that you won't love. In his marvelous novel, *The Plover* (St. Martin's Press, 2014), Brian Doyle writes of a character called "Enrique:"

One time when he was a small boy an uncle gave him a handful of seeds to start his own garden. It was his seventh birthday and he took the seven seeds and hid them from his brothers and took them out only late at night to gaze upon and touch gently in amazement that they were his and they meant food. The season for planting came and he did not plant, and the season for harvest came and he did not harvest, and a second season for planting passed, and still he did not plant them, but only took them out of their secret box late at night to roll them in his fingers and gape in amazement; until one night when they had grown so fragile and brittle that they shattered when he touched them, and there was nothing left in them but dust." (p. 181)

Things turn out okay for Enrique in the end. His author looks out for him. Our "Author" is looking out for us. But now is the season for planting, for loving, and we are not guaranteed another. "Whoever has ears ought to hear."