

## EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

# FARMER

### EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

#### *Introducing the Gospel*

##### *Parable of the sower (Matthew 13: 1-9, 18-23)*

In chapter 13 Matthew presents his third block of Jesus' teaching. This is the chapter of parables. The chapter begins with the well-known parable of the sower that Matthew copied from his primary source (Mark's Gospel), followed by the explanation given for the benefit of the disciples. The main point of this teaching is to emphasise that those who wish to understand the Kingdom of God must begin by understanding how things work in the natural world which God created.

Our image to stimulate reflection on this passage is *farmer*.

#### *Core extract from the Gospel (Matthew 13: 3-8; for reflection throughout the week)*

Jesus said, 'Listen! A sower went out to sow.  
And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path,  
and the birds came and ate them up.  
Other seeds fell on rocky ground,  
where they did not have much soil,  
and they sprang up quickly,  
since they had no depth of soil.  
But when the sun rose, they were scorched;  
and since they had no root, they withered away.  
Other seeds fell among thorns,  
and the thorns grew up and choked them.  
Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain,  
some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.'

#### *Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)*

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you have sown the word of life in our hearts.  
Give us grace to nurture the seed,  
that we may be fruitful in your service;  
today and every day.  
Amen.

**READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL**

**Matthew 13: 1-9, 18-23**

**The Parable of the Sower**

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

**The Parable of the Sower Explained**

'Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.'

## **ENGAGING WITH THE THEME**

### ***Dwelling with the text (Matthew 13: 1-9, 18-23)***

Begin to explore Matthew's account of the parable of the sower by employing the SIFT approach of Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking. You may find that one of these approaches comes easier to you than the others. But it is worth trying all four.

- What details in the passage catch your attention (Sensing)?
- What big ideas in the passage spark in your mind (Intuition)?
- What most touches your heart in the passage (Feeling)?
- What most stretches your mind and makes you think in the passage (Thinking)?

### ***Thinking and talking***

Identify topics within the passage that can get you thinking and talking. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- How do you understand the seed that fell on the path?
- How do you understand the seed that fell on rocky ground?
- How do you understand the seed that fell among thorns?
- How do you understand the seed that fell on good soil?
- What does this narrative say for us today?

### ***Using your Bible***

This parable of the sower was taken by Matthew from Mark's Gospel. It was also taken from Mark's Gospel by Luke. See just how much all three Gospels have in common, and note the differences.

- Mark 4: 1-9, 13-20
- Luke 8: 4-10, 11-15

Explore the piece omitted from the reading:

- Matthew 13: 10-17

Explore passages in the Old Testament that draw on images of natural growth:

- Psalm 65: 9-14
- Psalm 104: 10-17
- Isaiah 55: 10-11

## SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (YEAR A) Sunday 12 July 2026

### *Exploring online*

Widen your exploration of Matthew's account of the parable of the sower by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- The parable of the sower
- Godly play parable of the sower (YouTube)
- The sower in classic art

### *Drawing on experience*

The image to stimulate reflection on Matthew's account of the parable of the sower is *farmer*. Draw on your experience of farmers. For example:

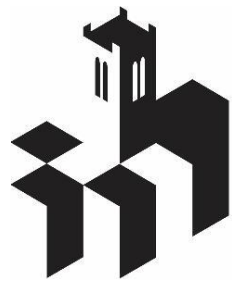
- Reflect on your experience of planting seeds or growing plants
- Reflect on your experience of observing farmers at work
- Reflect on your experience of learning from the natural world

What have you learned about farmers?

### *Creating and making*

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by the theme of Matthew's parable of the sower or by the image of the farmer.

- Plant some cress seeds and observe their growth.
- Make a collage showing the four kinds of soil in the parable.
- Make a display from seed catalogues of different kinds of seeds.
- Create a reflection, poem or prayer on the theme of the parable of the sower or the image of the farmer.



# Liverpool Cathedral

## EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

Each week we are inviting people in their homes to look forward to those Sunday services that follow the Revised Common Lectionary Gospel readings. We employ the SIFT approach (Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking) to encourage reflection on the Sunday Gospel. We are suggesting a variety of ways in which people of all ages, and households working together, may engage with the Gospel reading and celebrate that engagement with shared activities.

These materials have been developed by the Canon Theologian of Liverpool Cathedral working in collaboration with the staff team here at the Cathedral, and with sponsorship and support from the St Mary's Centre in Wales.



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