

Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Today we look at a very familiar passage. A passage that for many years has been used as a mission passage. But for today I want to look at it from another angle, from the angle of broadcasting with diligence. Why broadcasting you might be asking?

Farming and growing crops has changed so much, when this parable was first spoken by Jesus farming would have been very labour intensive profession unlike now when machines have satellite tracking and every seed finds its way into the soil. The farmer would have to sow seed by hand, and this was known as broadcasting. Some seeds would hit the mark and others would land on less prosperous places. This form of farming would need about 10% more seed.

Let me tell you a story, it is called, "The First Radio Broadcast." For their entire careers, wireless operators onboard US Navy and merchant ships had only heard Morse code coming through their headphones. However, a few days before Christmas in 1906, operators from the shore informed the ships' crews to listen at 9 PM on Christmas Eve for something special.

With curiosity, the ships' operators —affectionately known as "sparks" — tuned in as was suggested. Suddenly, they heard something that made them think they were dreaming. They heard singing, and a violin solo; then a man speaking. Some called their captain and ship's officers to come and listen along with them.

The genius responsible was Reginald Fessenden. He had succeeded in transmitting voice and music over the air. Fessenden played a violin solo of "O Holy Night" as he sang the last verse. He also read about the birth of Jesus from Luke chapter 2. Luke's account of

the angels' song "Glory to God in the Highest - and on Earth - Peace to Men of Goodwill" was heard as if by miracle. Fessenden concluded his broadcast by wishing all a Merry Christmas.

The first broadcast used to sing praise to God and to worship. The gifts that God had given to the engineers to design and produce radio being used to worship God. Through the ages the message being delivered in so many ways and now broadcast over the airwaves. Now as technology has developed, we worship here now online. We broadcast our worship and the message gets out there just the same. There have always been ways to broadcast to all generations.

The internet has been a great platform for us to broadcast out services, but it is also a place of misinformation. I look at some of the posts on Facebook and twitter and if you just read and don't dig deeper, you might believe some of the information. In this age when everyone has an opinion and each person can be right and the truth whatever that means now can mean many things. We weigh up information and examine what we hear and read.

We look to scripture and Isaiah 55:10-11 says

*As the rain and the snow*

*come down from heaven,*

*and do not return to it*

*without watering the earth*

*and making it bud and flourish,*

*so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,*

<sup>11</sup> *so is my word that goes out from my mouth:*

*It will not return to me empty,*

*but will accomplish what I desire*

*and achieve the purpose for which I sent it*

God uses us, sometimes in spite of our flaws and weaknesses because what he gives us to use for him does not come back empty handed.

What it is that we want to broadcast as we as the community of God in this time and place have many platforms to broadcast from?

If we look at the farmer, he sows seed, in this parable he would sow more seed than was needed. He would know that some of it would never flourish and that he still kept on sowing. The right conditions would mean that a percentage would grow and be the crop that he needed to harvest.

If we put ourselves in the place of the farmer, all of us are called to be a community of faith and all are called by our gifts and skills to the mission of God in this world. The conditions are right, and it might mean we too have to sew much more than we would want but God asks us to join in in his mission to the world. It is God who moves among this world, he's already there and asks us to join in. The job for us is not to harvest but to sow. To use the story of our lives to be a witness for Christ in this world. To sew love and hope, peace and joy in the world around us, in abundance and not expect it all to bear fruit.

1 Corinthians 3:7-8 says

*So, neither the one who plants nor the one who waters are anything, but only God, who makes things grow.<sup>8</sup> The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labour.<sup>9</sup> For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building.*

Each of us work with God to build the kingdom of God here in this time and place.

That take us to broadcasting with diligence. The buzz words in many industries is due diligence.

Due diligence means:

**Due diligence** is an investigation, audit, or review performed to confirm the facts of a matter under consideration. In the financial world, **due diligence** requires an examination of financial records before entering into a proposed transaction with another party.

**Diligence, in Christianity**, is the effort to do one's part, while keeping faith and reliance in God.

What we do or say no matter the method we broadcast from be it a conversation, a phone call, a worship service, whatever we do in life is being observed. If we say we are followers of Christ, we are to be seen as followers. Not just on the outer level, the outside face, or the Sunday behaviour but making the effort each and every day. Especially when it's difficult and you would rather not. There is an effort required by God to maintain our faith and that requires us to be reliant on God.

We were created by God to depend on each other. Like the farmer we depend on God who has sown in us the seeds of our calling in this world. Each one of us cultivates that seed and God nurtures it and helps it bear fruit.

This parable tells of the perseverance of those who hear God's word, those who hear and keep going, those who hear, and distraction gets in the way, those who for a time hear but it's hard to keep going. If we are honest at times in our lives, we have been all of these people. When hard times come, it's easy to think other people know better than God or that it's too difficult but I am reminded daily of these words in the morning prayers of the Northumbria community:

To whom shall we go?  
You have the words of eternal life,  
and we have believed and have come to know  
that You are the Holy One of God.  
Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ,  
King of endless glory.

We broadcast the hope and faithfulness of God by our lives and by our stories. Whatever method we use. We join our story to the stories of those through the ages, that God has sown deeds in their lives, he's watered and nurtured them and reaped the harvest for his kingdom.

After the service at 12 we will meet for a Zoom coffee time, a time to catch up with each other. I have just bought some new coffee and I am sorry that I can't share it with you, you will need to bring your own for the time being.

So, as we go into another week with God who continues to sustain us day by day until we meet again

We go with the Blessing of God Almighty

Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Be with you and all those you love

Today and always

Amen.