

07-12-20

Ps 119:105-112 Gen 25:19-34;
Ro 8:1-11; Mt 13:1-9, 18-23

Abraham's Seed

King David exclaims, "I praise You for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; all Your works are wonderful, this I know very well." (Ps 139:14) As we sit here together respiring and metabolizing, thinking, listening – each of us is a complete being. We cannot separate a human into parts: body, mind, spirit. When the Apostle Paul speaks of the difference between living in the Spirit – and living in the flesh, he is speaking of the world system and the kingdom of God as separate. When you and I enter the kingdom by way of faith in Jesus, we separate from the life of self-centeredness. We have opened the throne-room of our hearts and given Christ His rightful place at the center.

This brings us to a major theme of the Bible: Seed. From the seed-bearing plants in Genesis 1 (created on day three) all the way to the dragon making war with the seed of the woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet (that is, Israel) found in Revelation 12. I invite you to do that word study either with your concordance to the Scriptures – or at biblegateway.com. There are many, many entries in the list of Bible passages referring to "seed."

Jesus' parable (picture) of the farmer scattering seed is not about plants at all. He describes a generous person sowing seed in every possible type of soil. There is the compact soil of the path, the rocky ground, the untilled ground full of weeds and brambles – and then, the good soil – cleared, ploughed and ready for planting. If you paid for your bag of seed – say wheat or barley – would you scatter it so freely? For the Lord God the answer is *yes!* The seed is God's Word. God scatters the seed of God's Word everywhere. The power of the very same Word launched creation.

So, is this parable about soil preparation? That's the hard work of the farmer or the gardener. In every public park you will see the walkway that has been provided. It is designed into the plan, but you will notice little trails through a hedge – or across the corner of the planted area – where folks have gone because it is shorter and quicker. After a while, the little pathways are solid. It would take a pickaxe to break up the ground there. There is back-breaking labor involved in removing rocks and boulders from a field or garden – and also in digging out weeds and berry vines. But the parable isn't just about farmland.

Jesus explains the parable to His disciples. The condition of the soils is the condition of our hearts. The Lord Jesus provides a template. We may analyze these two brothers – the sons of Isaac: Esau and Jacob. The strife between them was foreseen during Rebekah's pregnancy. The two babies seem to be wrestling even before they are born. Rebekah asks herself why she prayed so hard to become pregnant anyhow. And the Lord speaks to her:

"The sons in your womb shall become two rival nations. One will be stronger than the other; and the older shall be a servant of the younger!" (Gen 25:23 TLB)

These two, Esau the elder and Jacob the younger, could not be more different. Esau is not as sharp as Jacob. When in doubt, Esau goes hunting. He loves to tramp through the woods and over the hills to hunt. Man of action – not a thinker. Perhaps also a bit hasty in decision-making. Esau is Isaac's favorite.

Jacob is a quiet man. He stays at home, among the cooking pots and the garden. He is smart, insightful, also shrewd and able to make a plan and see it through. He is Rebekah's favorite. Keep in mind that the Lord has spoken to Rebekah and told her that the elder son will serve the younger. She intends to see that things turn out in Jacob's favor.

Both these brothers are the seed of Abraham. But, are their hearts receptive to the Word of God? I believe both have heard about the greatness of the one true God. Their parents are godly. In the story we are hearing this morning, it seems that Esau has a heart like the beaten path. He has little time for spiritual values. He thinks about the basics – comfort, enough to eat – a life free from burdens. He goes for the quick fix – perhaps the easy way out.

(Continued on next page.)

Jacob has heard his mom speak of the prophecy about his future. He wants to inherit more than his share – the thistles and thorns of ambition and greed have choked out the holy Word of God in his heart. Surely Isaac and Rebekah have told the stories of Father Abraham's faith journey. Jacob would rather have all those herds and flocks and servants and wealth than to be God's man, the ***spiritual seed*** of his grandpa.

Neither son has a heart ploughed up and prepared to receive the Word that produces the fruit of righteousness. But who are we to tend somebody else's garden? The Scriptures do not claim that our spiritual fathers and mothers were perfect. Recall that the cosmic Farmer in Jesus' parable sowed seed everywhere – on every kind of soil.

We will soon see Jacob walk into the valley of decision. He will regret the tricks he played on his brother. In this Genesis he grabs the birthright of the firstborn for a bowl of stew!

Jacob wakes up to the glory and the righteousness of the one true God. And, he begins to consider the consequences of his dishonesty. Later, Jacob will realize God has seen his behavior and is not pleased. God has spoken a powerful prophecy into his life. God causes the rise and fall of nations. The Lord is going to plough Jacob up like a field and sow the seed of God's powerful Word in him.

“Following after the Holy Spirit leads to life and peace, but following after the old nature leads to death because the old sinful nature within us is against God. It never did obey God's laws and it never will. That's why those who are still under the control of their old sinful selves, bent on following their old evil desires, can never please God.” (Ro 8:6-8)

“...if the Spirit of God, who raised up Jesus from the dead, lives in you, He will make your dying bodies live again after you die, by means of this same Holy Spirit living within you.” (v 11)

I pray for our hearts to be willing to repent quickly – to be a field cleansed and prepared to receive the working of God's Word in and through us. May we produce the fruit of that holy life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.