

Seeds of Faith

11:27:30 -11:35:00= 7.5 minutes

RUMC July 13, 2007

You have heard the stories from the Mission Trip participants. I can't let this opportunity pass without drawing the connection between what you have heard and what you are about to see in Baptism.

- Let me ask the participants. Do you think we solved all of Denver's problems?
- Do you think we were able to solve all the problems of the children at the Salvation Army?
- Do you think we solved all the problems of the families whose houses we painted?
- Do you think we solved all the problems for the families who will receive one of the 750 food boxes we packed?

NO? Let's try this.

- Do you think we turned you into missionaries?
- Did we solve all of your problems?
- Did we bring you home completely different people than you were a week ago? Probably not completely different.
- SO DID WE MAKE ANY DIFFERENT AT ALL?

Of course we did! WE SOWED SEEDS. That's what today's scripture is all about.

Jesus teaches in today's scripture, first, that not every seed grows. Not every seed changes the world. Not every effort we make will bear fruit. Not everything we try will make the difference we would like.

Just like the seeds in the parable, some of the worship services we had this week—I'm sure-- fell on the path and were quickly consumed by

exhaustion or end of the day silliness. Just like in the parable some of the work we did in the Salvation Army fell among weeds and was quickly overwhelmed when the children returned to their homes where they might not get the attention and love you gave them during the day. Some of the work we did at the food bank fell on rocky ground. It will help the family to eat for a few days but will soon be replaced with that familiar gnawing hunger.

Not everything we did on work camp will change the world, the city, or even one life. . . but the second part of Jesus teaching is just as important. “Some seed fell on good soil and it grew and grew and produced 30, 60, even a hundred fold yield.” If even one seed we sowed made a difference for one family because they can be proud of their house, the trip was worth it. If even only one child understood for one hour what it meant to be loved and accepted and safe, it was worth the trip. If even one youth knows Christ better today than when they left and came home with a commitment to live as Christ’s hands and feet when they return, the sowing was not in vain. If even one seed grew the harvest will be bountiful and it was worth every dollar we spent, every hour of sleep we lost, and even every mile of Nebraska we crossed; Because God has blessed the harvest with super abundance.

You know even as we look at this mission trip as sowing seeds, it is at the same time the harvest. Many of these youth were brought before you 12-14 years ago- if not most we brought before some congregation for baptism.

In that service seeds were sown. Throughout their lives seeds have been sown by Sunday School teachers, and program directors, and neighbors, and parents and grandparents, and sponsors, and friends. For 12

to 14 years their parents have watered those seeds and nurtured those seeds, and cared for those seeds and encouraged those seeds until now in a sense they stand before you sprouted and beginning to sow seeds of their own. It is like a foretaste of the harvest. And let me tell you- after spending a week with these fine young men and women, the harvest will be plentiful. This ladies and gentlemen is not the church of tomorrow; this is the church of today.

Today we are reminded that not so long ago we promised to plant seeds in these young people and today they are producing fruit. But we also have the opportunity to promise to plant more seeds in Mason. Ben and Jodi have been planting seeds of love and care and comfort for almost 3 months . . . well actually for about a year if you count prenatal vitamins and care and I would be surprised if Jodi didn't sing to Mason before he was born. Those are important seeds you have planted.

Today you have asked us to join you in this great and awesome privilege of seed planting in Mason. As God's people in this church we will promise to :

FIRST: "proclaim the good news and live according to the example of Christ." That is a fancy way of saying that we will seek to be Christ-like in our words and actions. We will seek to be for Mason the face and hands and feet of Jesus. Mason will grow up looking up to these youth. He will want to do what the "big kids" do. He will learn what it means to be a Christian first of course , from Ben and Jodi as they show him that worship is important enough to come every week; as they model prayer and scripture reading in their family; and as they go about living their own discipleship. But he will also learn what it means to be a Christian from us. We must be

ready to show him to the best of our ability what it means to follow Jesus in word and deed.

SECOND we will surround him with love and forgiveness. It is easy to give a child negative attention. Don't touch that, don't go there, don't do that, don't say that. By surrounding him with love and forgiveness he will also learn the do's. Do love, do forgive, do unto others, do follow Jesus.

FINALLY we promise to pray for him. Even if you don't have much contact with Mason in Sunday School or programs or youth. Pray for him. That is the promise you make today. You will pray for him "that he may be a true disciple who walks in the way that leads to life." And not just Mason, but Ben and Jodi too, because many of us know that in some respects they haven't come to the hard part yet.

As the church --you promise to be Christ like in word and deed, surround him with love and forgiveness, and pray for him.

I want you all to notice in the service where we make that promise. I want you to take that promise seriously. To be Christ like in word and deed, surround him with love and forgiveness, and pray for him.

You have seen in the youth today what sowing seeds of faith in a young person's life can do. You just may end up sowing the seed that changes the world.

And if not the world, you will certainly end up changing their life.

That is what we want for Mason James today. We want his life to be filled with people who live like Jesus—that's you; people who will treat him like as Jesus would treat him—that's you; people who will pray for him as he grows in faith and grace—that's you. And you and you and me. Sow the seeds of faith. AMEN