



The Sower

Luke 8:4-15

"Are you ready for our hike, rangers?" Ranger Reggie called out as the campers sat down upon the logs around the fire pit at the edge of the forest.

"Yeah!" the campers yelled.

"Don't forget today's Creature Feature," Rosalinda offered.

Ranger Reggie pointed to a dirty white foam container in Rosalinda's hands. "What have you got in that little box?" he asked.

Rosalinda smiled. "Today's Creature Feature is, the Earthworm! Do you want to see them?"

"Yes!" the campers shouted as they crowded around to get a better look.

"Stand back, give 'em room!" she warned. Rosalinda opened the lid to reveal two brownish-gray, long, thin worms crawling on top of damp, brown dirt.

"Many people don't know this but earthworms are very nutritious. They are full of protein." Ranger Reggie added.

"Ewwww, nasty!" the campers screeched and stepped back.

"Don't worry. We won't eat these earthworms; we really need to them to aerate the soil," Rosalinda noted. "Earthworms are great for the environment because they crawl through the soil. That let's air get deep down in the dirt."

"Very good, Rosalinda!" Ranger Reggie exclaimed. "That air helps seeds to sprout and grow into beautiful blossoms! Let's read today's parable and find out why the earthworm is our Creature Feature." Ranger Reggie opened his Bible. "It's the Parable of the Sower!"

"I still don't get the connection," said Rosalinda. "Earthworms can't sew!"

Ranger Reggie laughed. "No, this is a different kind of sowing. It's not the kind you do with needle and thread. This one is about sowing seeds."

"Oh, like planting seeds in the soil?" she asked.

"Exactly!" Ranger Reggie replied and then began to read from Luke 8:

"A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up. Some fell on rock, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown."

"That was a great story, Ranger Reggie, but what does it mean?" Rosalinda asked.

"I'm glad you asked me that because the seed the farmer was sowing stands for the Word of God," Ranger Reggie replied.

"You mean the seed is like the Good News that Jesus is Lord of our lives?"

"That's right," Ranger Reggie agreed, "because we spread the Good News to everyone who listens."

"What about the birds? Why would the birds be in this story?" asked Rosalinda.

"Hey, I've got an idea!" Ranger Reggie suggested. "I've got some seeds in my pack. Let's sow some seeds just like the parable says. Maybe it will help you understand its meaning!"

Ranger Reggie took a few seeds and spread them on the middle of the trail. Then, he whistled and several song birds swooped down. The birds scooped up the seeds in their beaks and twittered as they returned to the treetops.

"You see how the birds scooped up the seeds? The seeds never even got to be planted! The birds stand for the Devil who steals God's Word so people don't believe Jesus is Lord." He handed the package of seed to Rosalinda and said, "Here, Rosalinda, sprinkle some seeds on those rocks by the side of the path."

"The seeds on the rock can't really grow, either. They have no place to put their roots," Rosalinda replied.

"Exactly! They are like the people who are happy to hear about Jesus but then quickly move on to the next thing that gets their attention. They never get rooted in God's Word," Ranger Reggie said as he dropped some more seeds among some thorny weeds.

"Let me guess," said Rosalinda, "the ones with the thorns grow up and get choked?"

Ranger Reggie agreed, "That's right. They want to follow Jesus but they become too busy worrying about all of the good things and the bad things in the world and they stop growing close to God."

"How sad," Rosalinda sighed.

Ranger Reggie knelt down and carefully planted the remaining seeds in the rich, black soil. "But the last group is the good seed that grows and grows!" he said as he stood up and brushed the dirt from his hands. He opened the Bible once more and read:

"But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop."

"That's the life I want to live! How can we be like the good seed?" Rosalinda asked.

"We can promise to follow God, put His Word in our heart, and do things His way instead of our way," Ranger Reggie explained.

"How do we do all that?" Rosalinda wondered.

"It's right in our Camper's Code," Ranger Reggie explained. "Let's all stand, raise our right hands, and say our Camper's Code together!"

All the campers stood up and repeated together:

"I will love God with all my heart.

I will love my neighbor as myself.

I will be a light wherever I go!"

"Great job! Now, let's get going on that hike!" Ranger Reggie said. And with that, all the campers scrambled to pull on their backpacks and follow their leaders.