



SEEDY CHARACTERS

by Elaine Bickel

Most people avoid seedy characters. They are thought to be dirty or undesirable. Certainly we would not like to think of ourselves as seedy characters, but Isaiah 64:6 puts all of us in that category with the words, *"We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment."* Without God's grace we are indeed hopelessly filthy and polluted.

Elaine Bickel is a child of God. Nothing else really matters!

Opening Prayer

Holy Spirit open our eyes and hearts to Your Word and Your will for our lives. Refresh our faith, renew our hope. Give us an awareness of our calling, our opportunities to serve. Empower us to be Your gently bold witnesses. Amen.

In the water of Holy Baptism, we are washed clean! How does God view us because of Christ? Read **Romans 6:3-14**. _____

How does this change our relationship with God? _____

How does this change our relationship with ourselves? _____

How are we now able to view ourselves? _____

Forgive ourselves? _____

How does this change our relationship with everyone around us? _____

What happens when we see others the way God sees us? _____

And Sow Forth ...

Usually a person would become dirtier after being buried, but when we are buried with Christ, we are made clean. In this wondrous baptismal washing, we become God's adopted children. The seed of faith is sown and watered and made to grow. To what is this seed of faith compared in **Matthew 17:20**? _____

According to **Matthew 17:20**, how does God's Holy Spirit empower us because of faith? _____

Read **Mark 4:30-32**. To what does God compare the kingdom of God? _____

How does God's kingdom grow? _____

And Sow On ...

Picture yourself as part of a large crowd. You are seated on the seashore, intently watching and listening to Jesus who is just off shore in a boat. His first word to you is recorded in **Mark 4:3**. What does Jesus ask you to do? _____

Now read **Mark 4:9** to see what Jesus tells you at the end of this part of His teaching? _____

What is it that Jesus wants us to listen to and hear? Listen carefully to Christ's words to you as you read **Mark 4:3-8**. _____

What does the sower do? **He sows.**

The sower is not the grower. He is the sower. The sower is not the soil analyzer. He is the sower.

Once we recognize ourselves as only the sower, we can leave the growth to God. Our job is simple. Ask God to prepare the soil. Sow His Word. Watch God cause the growth. As long as we are sowing, we are doing what God has told us to do.

Who are the people who were instrumental in sowing God's Word in your life? _____

Do they know how God has used them in your life? _____

What could you say or do to encourage them to continue sowing in the lives of others? _____

Make a list of people God brings to mind when His Holy Spirit calls you to sow for Him.

Read **Matthew 17:20** again and think about the image. What will you do with the life-giving Word (seed) He has placed in your hand? _____

Read **Mark 4:3** and replace the word sower with your name.

As you go forth to sow His Word, be encouraged by **I Corinthians 3:5-7**.

Closing Prayer

Lord, open my ears to truly hear Your Word. Help me to examine the soil in my life in the light of Your Word. Fill my hand with Your life-giving seed. Give me words and opportunities to share You with all others and especially those You have placed on my heart today. In Your Name I pray. Amen.

Closing

Sing or say together one of the following hymns: "Go Tell It on the Mountain" (*LSB* #388; *LW* #504) or "Hark, the Voice of Jesus Crying" (*LSB* #826; *LW* #318; *TLH* #496).