

Today's collect asks that all who call upon God  
will know and understand what things they ought to do, and  
may have grace and power  
faithfully  
to accomplish them.

The reading from Genesis, the Psalm, and the epistle all serve as reminders that we are  
called into certain works, empowered by God, but still sometimes unable to accomplish  
these works.

Today's Gospel is a parable, and because it is a parable,  
and there are many entries into the truth it carries,  
and I am allotted only 8 minutes,  
I want to spend this time exploring the attitude of the sower.

The person we see in the drawings and stained glass windows – with the bag of seeds  
flung over the back - just putting it all out there. A seemingly endless supply.

Throwing.

Throwing.

No worries about where it lands,  
or if the place is ready,  
or right,  
or if there will be enough.

I find myself adding to this sower's obvious attitude of abundance, an attitude of joy. Of  
trust. Of accepting that some of this is not going to take. But some of it will, possibly in  
ways the sower can't even predict, and maybe even create more seed on it's own.

The sower knows the work that needs to be accomplished.

Throw.

Lately I have been thinking a great deal about those seeds of grace, and how so often  
they come our way in the form of an invitation. An invitation to consider something; to  
listen, to help, or simply, to show-up.

Two weeks ago the theater group my son plays-with sent out an appeal for people to  
please – please - come help them move into their new space. We checked our schedules,  
were disappointed to discover we were available, so we went.

For 4 hours, in the brutal summer heat, we moved enormous stage sections, and about a  
hundred containers of stage props, in and out of moving vans across the city. For this

group to continue to bring the gift of theater to kids in the city, what needed to be accomplished, was accomplished.

Another agency on whose board I serve, invited me to chaperone a prom for youth who might not otherwise have had the opportunity to enjoy their own school's prom. So last night after preaching at the 5:00 service, I dressed up, went to the City Museum, stood around, and smiled. A lot. Accomplished.

Now, I do not believe for a moment that my life's training, education, experience and calling for over half a century was to prepare me to haul theater flooring, or to stand around and smile. But they asked, I was able, and it matters. And the work of small non profits and churches combined are a large part of the reason that, in the midst of all the bad news around us, studies show we are gradually making a difference in families here and around the world and having an impact in reducing the levels of poverty, hunger, illiteracy, and disease. Someone invites, someone responds. Things needed to be accomplished, and so gradually, they are.

Every night this week, for 4 hours a night, under David's leadership, we had 20 adults here at St. Timothy's cooking and playing, singing and praying, teaching and making the art you see in the colonnade and north parish hall, listening deeply to the thirty plus children who came for our Vacation Bible School. Telling them about God's love. Some adults were invited, others offered, others might've been hoodwinked or coerced, but they were all here, all of them saints, all a part of a team being present to these children – and we will never know the impact this week might've had on them.

Now hauling rice, or sitting at a registration table doesn't seem like much, but it carved out a space so at one point Nancy was able to take a child on a slow circuit of the prayer path to help him find some peace, Tony was able to give a reassuring pat on the back to a young person with questions, and Jane & Steve were able to light up a lot of faces as we sang about God's love.

The names of the entire VBS team are on the kiosk in the gathering space, and we need to thank them for understanding that this was where they were needed, and for having the grace and power to walk faithfully in this work. I invite you to read those names and thank them for their ministry.

But wait – there's more. We are looking for a couple of Sunday School teachers to start the year with us in September,  
and we need a chair person for the Harvest of Hope,  
and we need help moving the literature rack,  
and a scheduler for the 9:00 services,  
and prayer partners for our children,

and  
and  
and...

So we invite. And that feels a lot like throwing seeds.

Throwing.

Throwing.

Because these invitations are to do amazing things. They're not always to make art, or to start a revolution. Sometimes we just really need help moving some chairs.

A colleague of mine told a group of us that at her church they have a culture of taking turns. We were all very jealous. Her parishioners have accepted the fact that proclaiming the Gospel requires a wide variety of tasks. So when someone here puts out an invitation to step forward I want to remind you – it might not be your passion. It might not be your calling, vocation, or life's purpose. It might just be your turn.

Finally, I have to acknowledge that in two weeks we will mark the four-year anniversary of Father Marvin being among us here at St. Timothy's. A wise man, a kind pastor, and a generous servant of God's people, who has been throwing, throwing since he arrived.

He keeps inviting us to stuff. Wonderful Wednesdays. Game nights. Lenten Soup Suppers. Critical Conversations. Lectures. Let's try this! Come to this! Get on the bus! Frankly, it's kind of exhausting. And he does it with that sower's attitude of joy. Of trust. Of accepting that some of it will not take, some of it will, and much of it, once thrown, is absolutely out of his hands.

Throwing.

And loads of these seeds of invitation fell on fertile soil. They fell on YOU.

And you were able to accomplish many of the things you've wanted as a parish for a while now. Now we have more time for Christian Education on Sunday mornings. We have more people from the community taking advantage of our beautiful facility. A new worship service. Renewed fellowship. A Youth Director. A new mission statement.

Yes. Sure. Some of the seeds Father Marvin threw fell on *grumpy* ground (Jesus left that ground out of his little story).

But Father Marvin continues to throw with abundance, trusting that there is enough to keep throwing, and that we will have the grace to faithfully watch for opportunities to share in the work we have to do, together. Thank you Marvin. (*applause*)

There is a passage in Isaiah 55 reminding us beautifully that the love and grace of God falls to the earth like a gentle - - steady - - rain.. It falls on all of us, saturating our lives with opportunities for God's joy and peace. The seeds are thrown, the water flows freely, we are as ready as we can be for whatever comes.

Let's pray. *God, we thank you that when we listen in faith for invitations into your abundance, we can know what things we ought to do, and respond joyfully to accomplish them. Amen.*