

Prepare the Soil

Nothing grows where I live. I've lived there for thirty-seven years, and cannot seem to get any flower or shrub to take root and produce each year. Oh, I can get Rose of Sharon to grow, but that stuff will grow in cement. Most everything else seems to wither and die. I don't know if it's just that I don't have a green thumb, or bad soil, or a combination of both. All I know is that I live in a barren wasteland.

Last year I bought my wife a beautiful pink Hydrangea plant. We planted it out in front of the house with our fingers crossed, hoping it would take root. To our surprise it came up this year, and produced some of the most beautiful blue flowers I've ever seen. That's right...planted in pink, blossomed in blue. I read up on it to see why and found that if a Hydrangea plant is planted in alkaline soil, it grows pink. If the soil is acidic, it grows blue. When I bought the plant it must have had alkaline soil in the pot. My soil is very acidic, so when I transplanted it, it turned blue. I don't care what color it is. I'm just happy it came back.

I like roses, but I can't seem to get them to grow either. I'll plant them and they'll blossom for a season, but they die off and don't return the next year. Bad soil. I'll tell you how really bad it is. I'll prove that nothing can grow where I live.

When we got married forty-one years ago, we were given a wall clock as a wedding gift. I like that clock and it still hangs on my living room wall. It doesn't work anymore, but it's still pretty and has a little trough at the base where we put flowers. It looks good. One day a couple of weeks ago I came home from work, and as I was walking through the living room, I glanced over at the clock. I couldn't believe it. The flowers were curled up and wilting. They were dying. So I said to my wife, "I don't believe this! How bad can it get? Nothing lives here! The flowers in the clock are dying!" She smiled and said, "I know!" I said, "But how can that be? They're plastic!!!" So she explained that the flowers were getting dusty, and she decided to wash them. She took them to the sink and turned on the hot water; apparently too hot. When she placed them into the water, they began to wilt and curl up. It looked like they were dying. And I said, "It can't get any worse than this! We can't even sustain a plastic flower." Now that's barren!

Nothing grows where I live.

Matthew 13:3-9 says, "Behold, the sower went out to sow; and as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up. Others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of soil. But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. Others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out. And others fell on the good soil and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty. He who has ears, let him hear."

When we read this parable we think of the sower. We are all supposed to be sowers of the seed. We all have the responsibility to plant. But there's another message here for us. It's about the soil. People sow seeds into our lives every day. Yes, we have a responsibility to sow that seed, but at times, we are the soil and have a responsibility to prepare the soil to receive the seed. What kind of soil are we? Are we the fertile soil, whether acidic or alkaline, that can produce year after year? Are we the kind of soil that takes a rosebush and allows it to produce for a season then withers and dies? Or are we so barren that we can't even sustain a plastic flower?

We are the soil and we need to be sure we are tilled and cultivated and fertile enough to receive the seed, and produce a bumper crop. We don't want to fulfill the prophecy in Isaiah referred to in Matthew 13:14-15 which says, "In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; you will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; For the heart of this people has become dull, with their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes, otherwise they would see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and return, and I would heal them.'" No, we don't want that prophecy. But we DO want God to say to us what He said in Matthew 13:16-17: "But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it." Prepare the soil. Make sure that something is always growing where we live.