

A plan for planting

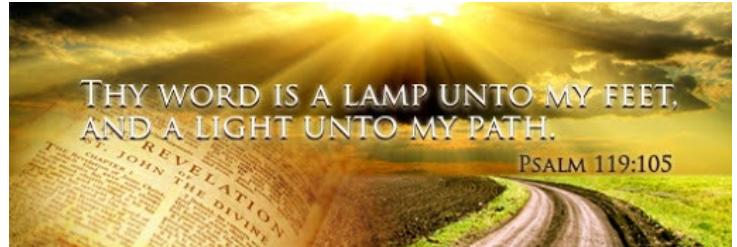
Many years ago I remember listening to a song by Amy Grant. It is a simple song but the words really stayed with me.

*Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path
Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path*

*When I feel afraid
Think I've lost my way
Still you're there right beside me
And nothing will I fear
As long as you are near
Please be near me to the end*

*.....I will not forget
Your love for me and yet
My heart forever is wandering
Jesus be my guide
And hold me to your side
I will love you to the end*

*Nothing will I fear as long as you are near
Please be near me to the end*



Source: [LyricFind](#)

Songwriters: Amy Lee Grant / Michael Whitaker Smith

Thy Word lyrics © Warner Chappell Music, Inc, Warner Chappell Music Inc

One of the reasons these words stuck with me is because of the depth of relationship which I was discovering and continue to discover as I read the bible and the way it is always teaching me something new. There are times when it is easy to get lost- or caught up in the way the world us. This is especially true in the world of Covid 19 where so much of our lives has been put on hold and we don't know how long this will go on for.

The chorus of the song are taken straight from Psalm 119. Now if you didn't know this is the longest of the psalms, in fact the longest 'chapter' in the Bible. It has 22 sections which link with the 22 consonants in the Hebrew alphabet. And this section comes under Nun נ which is like our n.

If we could read this psalm in Hebrew, the beginning of every verse in this section would begin with the consonant nun so נ is the first word which means lamp. The next section of the psalm is under samekh ס every verse begins with the consonant samech ס

This means that the psalm is an acrostic poem. Yet the psalm is really focused on how God speaks to people through God's law. There are many words used for God's law- but perhaps it is also helpful to think about God's law as the teaching of God in helping us live our lives in following God.

In many ways this is picked up in the gospel reading for today. Instead of a poem like the psalm, we have a parable. Jesus told many parables and in the middle bit we don't get read today, the disciples ask Jesus why he speaks in parables. He answers in a way which reminds them that not everyone understands what is being said to them, but the stories will reveal more as people spend time with them.

So there is a lovely parable of sowing seeds. No I am a gardener and I love working in the garden. When I am getting ready to plant seeds I get the soil ready, I make marks in the soil for where I want the seeds to grow then I place the seeds in, trying to make sure they are appropriately spaced.

That is definitely NOT the kind of sowing that is happening here in this parable.

Whoever the sower is they are either very generous or very wasteful. Seeds are scattered in the weeds, on the path, in the soil and on the rocky ground. The gardener in me says "Of course they will not all grow because they haven't landed in the right place".

The Christian disciple in me looks beyond the image of the sower into what Jesus may really be saying here.

It is true that Matthew does also have an explanation of what happens to the different seeds and that is certainly helpful. Yet we need to look beyond that explanation and wonder a bit about what it is saying to us now, in 2020, in Australia and in a time of Covid 19 Pandemic.

I think there are times when it is helpful for us to think of ourselves as the sower. As we live our lives, in what we say and how we act we are able to sow seeds. Sometimes they may be seeds of encouragement. Sometimes they are seeds about our faith, about God or about Jesus and what this all means for us. Sometimes the seeds might be words of comfort- pointing towards God as the great comforter. At other times they may be seeds which can help people question their own lives and begin to search for God in a new way. So, there are times, many times, when we are sowing the good news of God in our lives with the hope that others might understand and come to God themselves.



For us to be able to sow seeds though we need to have a good stock. So, I think there are times when we can think of ourselves as being the soil. If we are open and ready for God to speak into our lives, then God can plant all kinds of seeds. If we trust God's Spirit within us, then these seeds will grow, and we will grow, and our faith will deepen.

As plants grow from the soil, then they become seeds for others to share. In some ways I think it is really important for us to do the best we can to have the best seed in our lives to share with others. For many of us, this comes about by spending time with God in reading the Bible, in prayer and in worship with each other.

The relationship with God can only deepen when we spend more time with God.

This deep relationship with God, keeps us on the right path, even though sometimes we need to stop and check in we are walking with God- not following our own path. In the song I had at the beginning there are the words *My heart forever is wandering, Jesus be my guide And hold me to your side*

Our human nature can lead us into strange places, but it is our trust in God and our desire to walk in the ways of God that keep us.

So My prayer for you this week is that you might be a generous sower, trusting that God's Spirit will take the seeds that you sow and help them bear fruit. I also pray that you might be fertile soil, bearing much fruit as you grow deeper in your relationship with God. May God's word be a lamp unto YOUR feet and a light unto YOUR path. And in this, may you discover more of God's plan for your life and God's plan for your planting.