



Message: ***Just Keep Swinging*** | July 12, 2026 | Speaker: **Pastor Eddie Eddy**

Matthew 13:1-9 *13 Later that same day Jesus left the house and sat beside the lake. ² A large crowd soon gathered around him, so he got into a boat. Then he sat there and taught as the people stood on the shore. ³ He told many stories in the form of parables, such as this one: "Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seeds. ⁴ As he scattered them across his field, some seeds fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate them. ⁵ Other seeds fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The seeds sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But the plants soon wilted under the hot sun, and since they didn't have deep roots, they died. ⁷ Other seeds fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants. ⁸ Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted! ⁹ Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand."*

L: This is the word of God for the People of God P: **Thanks be to God**

"Keep Swinging"

Several years ago, while working through my ordination studies, I took a class called *Theological Heritage II*. It was one of those courses that surprised me. The focus was on how the Church became what it is today. In just a few weeks, we traced the history of Christianity from the turn of the first century around the year 100 all the way to the Council of Nicaea in 325.

One of the sections that stayed with me was our study of the monastic movement. The monastics were deeply devoted followers of Christ who sought to distance themselves from the distractions and temptations of society so they could learn to love as God loves. This movement eventually gave rise to what we know as monks—men and women who embraced seclusion and solitude, not because they disliked people, but because they wanted to see others more clearly through the eyes of God.

That information led me to a story about some monks I want to share with you.

So...In a monastery that trained young Christian brothers for various callings within the church, one brother lived in constant fear of being called upon to preach a sermon in the chapel. His apprehension grew with each passing day until finally...he got up the nerve to go talk to the chief priest with a proposal he had in mind.

"Sir," he said, "I am willing to do any menial job that you want to give me. I would be thrilled to go out into the fields and plow...and fertilize and water them by hand to intensify the growth. Just say the word and I will get down on my hands and knees and scrub the floors of the monastery or clean the toilets. I would be honored to polish the candlesticks, paint the window frames or cut wood for our fire. I am ready and willing and to do anything you might ask of me. My only request...is that you do not ask me to preach a sermon in the chapel.

Well, once the words finally came out of his mouth...he felt this sense of relief come over him...and he actually felt pretty good about their conversation. He let out a big breath and the tension left his shoulders. The chief priest looked at the young monk, nodded his head and said, "Tomorrow," ..."you are to lead the chapel service and preach the sermon."

The next day came after a long night. Nervous and awkward, the brother stood at the pulpit and looked out into the waiting eyes of his peers. Not quite sure what to say, he licked his lips...swallowed hard... and simply asked, "Brothers, do you know what I am going to say?" They all shook their heads no. He continued, "Neither do I. Let's stand for the benediction. Peace be with you."

This upset the chief priest. After the service he chased down the young monk and said, "I'm going to give you a second chance. Tomorrow you will lead the chapel service again, and this time I want you to give a message."

So the next day the young brother took his place at the pulpit again. He began his message the exact same way, "Brothers, do you know what I am going to say?" This time they all nodded their heads yes. He said, "Since you already know, there is no point in my saying it. Let's stand for the benediction. Peace be with you."

Wow...this left the chief priest with smoke coming out of his ears. He was livid. Once again, he summoned the young brother. This time he said, "I am tired of your tricks. You've got one more chance to redeem yourself. Tomorrow...you will preach a sermon. If you fail to do so, I will put you in solitary confinement on bread and water."

The next morning was the same scene. The nervous monk began just like the two previous days, "Brothers, do you know what I am going to say?" this time...Some nodded their heads yes...some shook their heads no. He then said, "Let those who know tell those who don't. Let's stand for the benediction. Peace be with you."

Maybe I should just end here...then again...maybe not.

You see...this story about a young monk is a parable. A story with a point to make. This monk's story is one Jesus might have used because Jesus told stories with a purpose. He understood that people come from all kinds of diverse backgrounds and educational levels...but by using parables... everyone could comprehend a simple story that taught a lesson.

So...instead of "preaching at" his audience, he would often catch their attention with an entertaining story that would leave the listener thinking deeper about his or her own life.

In our passage this morning...Jesus told the Parable of the Sower from a boat...just off the shoreline...to a huge crowd gathered on the beach around him. Much like we are here today. I think this parable and the one I started with...kind of share the same moral. No matter what...we will always be given the opportunity... to keep swinging.

In the story of the monk...he was called to keep preaching...even if he didn't have the best outcome. In Jesus' parable...the sower was called to keep sowing...even if some of the seed never produced any fruit.

Think of it this way...if the sower had not gone out with the seeds... there would be no story at all. No lesson to be learned. If the sower had not gone out into the field in the first place, had not reached into his bag of seed and kept swinging his arms with hands full of potential...if he had instead stayed home...and left his seeds in the grain bin, none of this would have happened...and no one would understand the message of faith without failure.

You see...the sower went out to sow. He took action...He took the seeds in a sack and shook them things all over...not worrying where they landed.

That's the first step. He didn't worry where all the seeds fell. Some, he knew would get eaten by the birds. He knew some start out good...but would just as quickly...wither and die. He also knew that some would not be able to thrive among the weeds.

But the important thing to the sower was...that if he faithfully kept swing that seed...he knew the return on investment would outweigh the loss. I have to believe that even in the places where the seed died or was eaten or withered and dried up...in some way...that loss...would fertilize the weak soil for a future harvest.

We have a few farmers or gardeners here today. We all know that if we don't plant...we don't grow...if we don't grow...we don't eat. That is the same idea in this parable...if the good news of Jesus Christ kept stored up in the church building...it's like seeds in a bag.

What do you do with seeds in a bag. About all that's good for is grinding into wheat and making bread. Once the seed is gone...it won't take long and you will be hungry. We must keep swinging that seed and allowing it to fall where it may...and then...trust God to bless our work.

The gospel of John reminds us that unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies...it remains a single grain. But if it dies...it produces many seeds.

Friends...we are called to keep swinging.

Babe Ruth played professional baseball from 1914 until 1935. In those 21 years he stood at the plate 8399 times. He remains the number 3 home run hitter in 2020. 714 home runs in his career. But we all know that you will never hit a home run... if you don't swing the bat. Babe Ruth kept swinging. And not every swing was a homer. Sometimes...it was a swing and a miss. He struck out 1330 times. But he kept swinging.

The founder of the Methodist church, John Wesley went through a time where he questioned his effectiveness as a preacher. Let me share this article I read about our founder as I close today.

John Wesley, recently returned from a disastrous mission to the province of Georgia (U.S.), was suffering a crisis of faith. Wesley had gone to Georgia hoping to take the Word of God to the Native Americans. Instead, after backing out of an engagement to Sophia Hopkey, he skipped out of the country just ahead of a second attempt to hold him for breach of promise. To say that Wesley's faith was at low ebb is putting it mildly. As far as he was concerned, he didn't possess the requisite faith for salvation. He was even considering giving up preaching. In his journal, he said "Leave of preaching. How can you preach to others, who have not faith yourself?" I asked Bohler, whether he thought I should leave it or not. He answered, "By no means." I asked, "But what can I preach?" He said, "Preach faith till you have it; and then, because you have it, you will preach faith."

"Keep Swinging" was the advice he received from his mentor.

The sower went out to sow. Not every seed grew into a plant. Not every plant survived. But he planted seeds so abundantly that he ended up with a plentiful crop.

The young monk had no idea what to say...but he kept swinging. We don't know if he ever had a harvest.

Babe Ruth kept swinging his bat...even when the stats said he had a better chance of striking out than hitting a home run.

We are called to love our neighbor without any assurance that we will be loved back by them. It doesn't matter. Just keep swinging.

Go and sow the seeds of the kingdom of God. That's our mission; the outcome is in God's hands.

To God be the Glory. Amen.

Invitation to the Offering

Friends, in the Parable of the Sower, Jesus reminds us that the seed cannot accomplish its purpose if it stays in the bag. It must be scattered. It must be released. It must be entrusted to God.

The same is true for us.

Everything we have has been given to us by God, and part of our worship is returning a portion of those blessings to Him. Every gift we place in the offering plate becomes another seed in the field of God's Kingdom. Some of those seeds become ministries that feed the hungry. Some become programs that teach children about Jesus. Some help care for those who are hurting, grieving, or searching for hope. We may never see every harvest, but we trust the One who does.

The sower didn't stop sowing because some seed was lost. He kept swinging because he believed the harvest was worth it.

Today, as we bring our tithes and offerings, we do the same. We keep sowing. We keep trusting. We keep participating in God's work of bringing people from death to life, from lost to found, and from darkness into His marvelous light.

Let us worship God through our giving.

Closing Prayer and Dedication of the Offering

Gracious and Heavenly Father,

We thank You for the privilege of being part of Your harvest field. Long before we ever knew You, someone planted seeds of faith in our lives. Someone prayed for us, taught us, encouraged us, and pointed us toward Jesus. Today we give thanks for the faithful sowers who kept swinging even when they could not see the results.

Lord, receive these gifts that have been offered today. Bless them and multiply them for Your purposes. Use them to proclaim the Gospel, strengthen Your Church, care for those in need, and make disciples of Jesus Christ throughout our communities and around the world.

And Father, we offer more than our finances. We offer ourselves. Scatter us like seed into the places where You have planted us. Give us courage to keep loving, keep serving, keep inviting, keep sharing, and keep trusting, even when we cannot immediately see the harvest.

As we leave this place, remind us that success is not measured by what we can count, but by our faithfulness to Your call. Help us to keep swinging, keep sowing, and keep trusting that You will bring forth a harvest in Your perfect time.

We pray all these things in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Amen.