Once upon a time

**Matthew 13.1-9,18-23**

Jesus tells the crowds a parable of seed being sown onto different sorts of ground. Later, he explains it to the disciples as an illustration of how different people respond to hearing the word of the kingdom.

So many people wanted to see Jesus and hear what he had to say, that he had to sit in a boat and teach the people standing on the shore. He told them many things through parables.

‘Listen!’ Jesus said. ‘A farmer went out to sow his seeds. As he scattered them, some of the seeds fell on the path and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell onto rocky ground. At first they grew quickly, but when the sun came out they got all burnt up because they had no roots in the shallow soil. Other seeds fell among thorns, which grew up around them and choked them. Other seed fell on good soil and they grew into thirty, sixty, a hundred times more wheat. Listen!’ Jesus said again. ‘If you’ve got ears, listen!’

Jesus explained the parable of the sower to the crowd. ‘What did I mean by the seed on the path being eaten up?’ he said. ‘Well, that’s like when the good things that God has planted in our hearts get snatched away by the devil. And the seed on the rocky path? That’s like when someone hears God’s word and loves it and is full of joy, but their enthusiasm disappears as soon as trouble comes their way. And the seed among thorns? Well, that’s like when someone hears God’s word but worry and greed take over. But the seed planted in good soil – ah, the seed in the good soil is like the person who hears God’s word, loves it and lives it, so it produces thirty, sixty, a hundred times more goodness in their lives.’

**Glossary**

**devil** a personification of evil, also called Satan or ‘the evil one’.