

Isaiah 40:21-31

Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to live in; who brings princes to naught, and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing. Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows upon them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble. To whom then will you compare me, or who is my equal? says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and see: Who created these? He who brings out their host and numbers them, calling them all by name; because he is great in strength, mighty in power, not one is missing.

Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, “My way is hidden from the Lord, and my right is disregarded by my God”? Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Sermon

I used to have this part time job helping to organize a Farmer’s Market in Atlanta. We would gather all these little organic farmers to sell vegetables on the front lawn of a church in my neighborhood. And the church was a great host for all the families that would come to do their shopping each Wednesday evening. They had a couple of volunteers from the congregation that would come out and set up a “Kid’s Tent”, where every week they would have a new art or craft project. Sometimes they would help kids paint pictures of birds and glue real feathers to the wings. Sometimes they would teach them about honey bees and help them cut yellow and black paper into bee shapes and have them fly all over our little market. And one early spring day, they told me that their project that evening had been inspired by an idea called “Guerrilla Gardening”.

They brought with them two buckets - one was filled with potting soil and the other with good old Red Georgia Clay. And so, of course all the kids got extra interested in this project! So all the kids lined up and I watched as they pulled out packets of seeds. Some were flowers and some were food. They had sunflowers and sweet potatoes, lettuces and lilacs, marigolds and mustard greens. And they let the kids dig in to the first bucket, for a handful of potting soil. And they asked them to mix in a whole bunch of seeds. Then, they wrapped it all up in that old red clay and let the dunk it in some water so it would all hold together and to the kids delight, they called them “Seed Bombs.”

And before those kids were allowed to leave, while they waited for that clay to dry out and hold tight together, they asked each child to close their eyes for a moment. And they asked them to imagine the ugliest little piece of land in their neighborhood. Maybe it was the median in the

middle of the street, or some old vacant lot, or even that little corner of the yard where the dog likes to do their business. And they made those kids promise, that they would become “Guerrilla Gardeners” taking their “Seed Bombs” and launching an attack on all that ugliness.

And then the kids would leave, hardly able to wait to get home. Because they were so excited to see how the world might change.

And I can only imagine the power they put into throwing those “seed bombs” into the ugly corners of their yard with their all out guerrilla attack. They must have thrown so hard that the little clay balls exploded against the ground, scattering those seeds everywhere.

Because, I’m sure the kids probably forgot about that project for a while, but later that summer some of those families came back. And the parents showed photos, of the before and after. How a little strip of dirt, between the sidewalk and the street, was all of a sudden lush with the beauty of flowers and food for their family to eat.

The powers of this world may wither up in the wind. What seems like it will last forever one day, may be gone in the next. And the roots we lean on shrivel and fall.

But, the seeds of blessing that God plants for us are sure to flourish and grow, even in the toughest soil and the ugliest corner of our yards. The flowers will sprout in ways that shock and surprise, even when we have forgotten all about them. For the Holy One has planted blessings for all of you. And no matter how far God’s seeds might scatter God knows the name of every one and sends them to you with purpose and love. If they come up parched and dry, God will send the rain down upon them and they will renew their strength. And when God calls on them to bloom, not one bud will be missing.

So lift up your eyes on high and see, that our Guerrilla Gardener God continues to bless his beloved people, even in the most difficult and ugly corners of our lives - with seeds of grace and hope. Amen.

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