

When I signed up for the job, I was given a parcel of land to work. Now, I wasn't exactly a farmer, but what I lacked in knowledge I made up for in enthusiasm - or at least that's how I figured it. I read everything I could on the subject. Then it was time for the practical stuff.

First, I went into town for supplies and introduced myself to the locals.

I soon found out what they thought of my acreage. One old codger said, "You must be joking! Even the wallabies there have to pack a cut lunch!" After the laughter had died down I told them that really it was the Master who chose it for me, and they laughed even harder. "More fool you!" was their response. I tried to explain my relationship with my Master (how I longed for them to get to know him!), but it was no use. So I knew that each time I went into town I'd be in for some good natured ribbing.

However, it wasn't long before I found that they were right - at least about the land, which wasn't what you might call 'fertile'. In fact it was mainly rocks, with a few patches of reasonable soil between them. However, I didn't let that daunt me. I duly went out and scattered the seed willy nilly across the landscape, rocks and all.

Suffice it to say, the yield wasn't what you might call 'abundant.'

To supplement my income, I ran a few sheep and goats, but even that wasn't very profitable either. Grass for grazing wasn't in good supply. But despite the old bloke's predictions, the local inhabitants - kangaroo, wallaby, wombats - seemed to manage, except in drought conditions, when I took pity on them and fed them too.

I still persisted, season after season, but eventually I became despondent, and went to the Master to find out what I was doing wrong. We would meet regularly on top of the hill at the back of the house, where there was a large, flat rock. There I would sit and we'd talk. So that's where I went. It was, by the way, one that I had generously sown with my blithely scattered seeds.

As I said, I was depressed, and not a little angry. After all, it was He who allotted me this uncompromising bit of scrub, so what did he expect? Grain trucks lined up to collect the crops? Fatted lambs being carted off to market? I spent time swinging between blaming me and blaming him.

He said nothing.

Eventually I lapsed into morose silence (two could play at this game) and picked idly at a bit of greenery next to where I was sitting. Suddenly I realised that I shouldn't really be there. This was, after all, solid rock, with weathered grooves here and there. But there it was. One of the seeds had obviously fallen into a deep groove where a little soil had accumulated, and by some miracle survived to struggle up to the light.

My Master broke the silence. He simply said, "You know, a single tiny seed can split rocks like this one..... eventually."

That was all he said, but it set me thinking. Then it occurred to me that not all hard work needs to be for spectacular results. I had resented the lack of evidence of my toil, but it was there, nevertheless. In fact it was right under my nose. I just had to look. I thought of my neighbours who viewed my work as irrelevant, or worse, scorned my Master and his choice of land. But somehow the sight of that lone seedling made it all worthwhile. I didn't need their approval. There were more important things going on here than planting abundant crops or raising fat, sturdy lambs.

I don't know what the outcome of my work will be, but maybe, just maybe, the seeds that I sow might find root in the hearts and minds of my neighbours, and grow enough to split their crusty, defensive shells, and allow a bit of sunlight in. They might even get to know the Master.... eventually.

Either way, my job is to sow. The rest is up to Him.

## **The sower went forth to sow.....**



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