

The Sassy Brassy Sunflower Seed

Once upon a time there was a sassy, brassy sunflower seed.

He came from a much bigger sunflower than this one. Do you see the seeds in the middle? He was one like this only much bigger – and he thought that he knew everything.

The sassy, brassy sunflower seed was one of about 1000 seeds on a big sunflower head [like in this picture].

This sassy, brassy sunflower seed didn't want to be planted or eaten. No he was special, different, he thought. He didn't want to grow another sunflower. And he certainly didn't want to be a snack for ball players in between innings. He felt special and thought he deserved special treatment.

So, when the farmer came to weed around the large sunflower, the sassy, brassy sunflower seed took his case right to the top. He told the farmer, "I don't want to be planted like the other sunflower seeds, and I DEFINITELY don't want to be eaten!"

The farmer asked, "Well, what do you want to be?"

Puffing out his little chest, the seed replied, "I want to be the king of all sunflower seeds and sit high up above all the sunflowers."

"As you wish," replied the farmer.

So the farmer took the sassy, brassy sunflower seed and put him on top of a post overlooking the sunflower field. After a few moments in that position, the seed complained again to the farmer, "Wait, wait," the sassy seed declared. "It's too hot up here all by myself. I feel like I'm shriveling up! And there's nobody to talk to. I feel lonely already."

"That's what you wanted, isn't it?" asked the farmer. "To be above everyone and everything else?"

"Yes, but . . ." the little seed didn't know what to say.

"Yes, but what?" asked the farmer.

"But I didn't think I'd feel so all alone or so hot or so dry or so far away from everybody."

"Alright," said the farmer. "Then how about this: if I plant you with the other seeds you won't be lonely or hot – and you'll be useful. You won't be above everyone else, but you'll be just as special as everyone else. You will grow up to be all that you can be."

The seed agreed, and the farmer planted him in a new field alongside his fellow sunflower seeds. He grew up just as tall and beautiful as the other sunflowers, and maybe even a little taller. He became all that God had created him to be, and about a thousand more seeds came from him.

So you see, God makes each of us special and has a mission for each of us. God says, "Don't think of yourself as above anyone else. I love everyone the same. I will help everyone to grow as much as they can so that they can produce good fruit and become all that I want them to be."

Let us pray. Dear God, make us into all you want us to be, bearing good fruit, and lots of it, to help others in need. In Jesus' name. Amen

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What kind of seed are we? Sassy and brassy? Blindly obedient? Somewhere in between? The kingdom of God is filled with all kinds! But will we bear good fruit for God and how does God want us to do that?

A mustard seed is much smaller than a sunflower seed. It hardly seems like anything can grow from it. And yet even that unlikely seed unleashes such brush that it's hard to control. Don't

forget, God has used the “little guy” and the unlikely person throughout history to do God’s work. The “sassy, brassy” person has their reward, as Jesus tells any in the crowd on the Mount who like to show off their faith (Matthew 6). As one person has said, “Like a mustard seed, God’s kingdom is unstoppable. It is going to fill the whole world.” (Carolyn Brown, www.worshippingwithchildren.com)

Jesus so often spoke in parables because, on the one hand, their meaning is apprehendable in their simplest form, but on the other hand, those who want to go deeper are not disappointed. They are little “riddles,” as Steve Molin calls them, “stories that leave the listener with the responsibility of figuring out just what they mean.”

Molin says, “The youth director on our staff told me a riddle, and then he left town on a week-long camping trip without telling me the answer. He told me the riddle, and then he said ‘Oh yeah, only 17% of Stanford graduates figured out this riddle, but 80% of kindergarteners knew the answer.’ And then he left! I could have strangled him! But here's the riddle:

"What is stronger than God,
more evil than the devil,
poor people have it,
rich people don't need it,
and if you eat it, you'll die?"

The answer is: "Nothing." Nothing is stronger than God or more evil than the devil. Nothing is what poor people have and rich people don't need. And if you eat “nothing” you’ll die! ([Yup, They Are Mustard Seeds](#) by Steven Molin)

Parables are riddles that cause the listener to *want* to think. They nudge us into figuring out what Jesus is saying, and maybe, upon discovery, influence our lives.

God wants us to listen and learn; we don’t have all the answers. God wants us to “play” with the parables, to roll them over and over like a riddle, to examine them and go deeper in our understanding of them. God’s kingdom is like a mustard seed *and* like someone scattering seed that sprouts and grows large and healthy fruit that will be good when harvest time comes. God’s kingdom will grow within the hearts of those who are open to it; it probably won’t within those who think they know it all or are sassy and brassy and entitled.

So God wants us to be all that we can be, sharing with and caring for sisters and brothers who don’t know God. God will plant us where God wants us to be: listen, learn, and bring forth God’s kingdom in your life where you live and work and play. Amen

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