

Story 4. The Sowers



Happypotamus woke up with a headache. She had a big head and so her headache was as big as a volcano. “Oh dear,” she said. “I can’t be sick today. This is the most important day of the year. It is the day I plant my wheat. If I don’t plant it today, I won’t have any wheat to reap. No wheat - no flour, no cakes for my friends. I must phone Dog. She’ll make me better.”

Soon the Dog Taw arrived at the farm. “You are as hot as a kettle,” said Dog as she took the thermometer from Happypotamus’ mouth. “You must stay in bed all day.”

“Not today, I must work. If I don’t work, no wheat - no flour and no cakes for my friends,” said Happypotamus. “My sons are away so I must sow the seed myself.”

“If you don’t go to bed today, you’ll be in hospital tomorrow,” said Dog.

“What about my wheat? It must be planted today. What can I do?” wailed Happypotamus.

“Why don’t you ask your friends? They will help,” said Dog.

“What a good idea,” said Happypotamus. “After all, they’re the ones who eat my cakes. I’ll phone them now.”

So she phoned her friends.

Wombrat said he would come if she gave him chocolate.

Geelaugh was busy but said he’d come as soon as he bought a new car.

Cupine said he would be pleased to help.

Happypotamus pulled on her large striped pyjamas, saying to Dog as she climbed into bed, “They are such good friends. I’ll reward them for their work. At harvest time they can reap the crop that they have sown and I will let them keep half.”

“What about chocolate for Wombrat?” reminded Dog.

“Only when he finishes sowing. And he can still have half of what he reaps,” commanded Happypotamus, climbing into bed, putting her paws on her sore head, closing her eyes and nodding off to sleep.

Soon the three workers arrived. “I’m as hungry as a monster. I’ll have my chocolate now,” said Wombrat.

“Only when you finish,” said Dog. By now Happypotamus was sound asleep, snoring and dreaming of a huge harvest. She had explained to Dog what the three workers must do.

Wombrat, Geelaugh and Cupine collected the seed and marched like soldiers out into the fields.

It wasn’t all that long before Wombrat was back at the house demanding his chocolate.

“Have you finished already?” asked a very surprised Dog.

“Easy peasy. Of course I’ve finished. When you’re working for chocolate you work fast as lightning. So give me my chocolate and I’ll be off,” said Wombrat snatching the chocolate from Dog’s paws and munching it as he headed out the gate.

Soon after, Dog was again surprised when Geelaugh arrived back.

“Finished.” he said. “Must be off. See ya.” He drove off in his new car; a cream one. But he noticed that the car was dusty from the farm. “I’ll have to sell it – I’ll buy that gold car I saw this morning.” We all know that Geelaugh doesn’t like dirty or dusty cars.

The sun was setting slowly in the west as Cupine arrived back at the house. He was tired, dirty, hungry and thirsty. Poor Cupine. “That was hard work,” he said as Happypotamus came out of her bedroom. She was feeling better and pleased that her friends had sown the seed.

Six months later, near the end of autumn, it was time to harvest the wheat. Her three friends arrived at the house ready to work.

“I’ll have my chocolate before I start – gives me energy,” said Wombrat.

Happypotamus was quick to reply, “I agreed to give you chocolate when you were sowing the seed. So no chocolate today. Sorry. But I will give you half of the wheat you reap.”

Reluctantly, a very grumpy Wombrat headed out of the house with ten empty bags in his pouch.

In as much time as it takes to say ‘Wombrat loves chocolate’ he was back again. “Here you are. One bag of wheat. I’ll have half of it,” he said as he shovelled pawfuls into his mouth and into his pouch.

Happypotamus was amazed at such a small amount of wheat. What had gone wrong? But when Wombrat explained she understood. Wombrat had been so lazy that he had simply scattered the seeds as he walked down the stony path near the house. Never once did he go into the good ground where the seeds could take root.

“You didn’t expect me to walk on the ploughed ground. It’s rough. It would hurt my paws. I just threw the seed in the air as I hurried down the middle of the path. Hundreds of birds were following me. They must have eaten the seeds. Don’t blame me, blame the birds,” responded Wombrat.

Not long after, Geelaugh arrived back with two not very full bags of wheat. Happypotamus’ again was surprised. “What’s going wrong with my crop?” she asked. But when Geelaugh explained what he had done, she understood.

“I walked among all the bushes. I’m as tall as a crane, you know, so I ate all the juicy tips off the bushes as I walked. Very tasty. I just threw the seeds here and there. I suppose some landed in the bushes, but if bushes can grow, so can wheat,” explained Geelaugh.

Happypotamus was upset to hear this and she said to Geelaugh. “Most of the seed landed among the weeds and the thorns. The weeds took all the goodness out of the soil and the seeds died. Any that grew among the spikey thorns were choked and also died. Only the seed lucky enough to land on good soil grew. That’s why you only picked two bags and that’s why you only get one to take home.”

Geelaugh didn’t care. His mind was on the new mauve car he was going to buy. His green car got dirty driving to the farm.

The sun was setting when Cupine struggled back into the house; tired, dirty, hungry and thirsty. “That was hard work,” he puffed as he lifted twenty bags of wheat onto the table. Ten bags are too many for me, I’ll only take five,” he said as he fell exhausted to the floor. Poor Cupine.

“It was very hard work sowing the seed,” puffed Cupine. “Walking up and down the ground that you had ploughed so well. But reaping the seed was even harder. And then picking twenty bags of wheat was almost more than I could carry.”

Happypotamus looked out the window. She knew that Cupine had worked hard to plant the seed in the good ground. She knew that the seed the three animals planted was exactly the same. But she also knew that unless the seed is sown in good ground it will not grow properly. Cupine had proved that good seed in good ground makes for a good crop.

Lucky Cupine.

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Source Notes and Discussion

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Parable of the Sower: Mark 4: 3 – 9; Luke 8: 5 - 15

Similar to the Bible parable but we have three sowers; only one who sows the seed in the good ground. This potentially changes the emphasis of the story from the soil to the sower. In discussion with children the emphasis should be brought back to the soil. Only when the seed is in good soil can we, the seed, ‘bring forth good fruit’.