

Prayer: Creating God, you have blessed with many talents. May we never be afraid to try something new if it means we can be co-workers with you. When we feel overwhelmed or ill-equipped, help us see ourselves as you see us. May the seeds we plant grow to spread your word so all may know of your love for us and all creation. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Matthew 13:3-8

<sup>3</sup> And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup> And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. <sup>5</sup> Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil.

<sup>6</sup> But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away.

<sup>7</sup> Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. <sup>8</sup> Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

Hello everyone, my name is Jonathan Dodson, and I live here in beautiful northwestern Minnesota. I'm a child of God and a follower of Jesus and I serve a couple of churches up here; Emanuel and Ebenezer, where I am not as a professional video editor as you'll soon find out. I'm so glad you tuned in for this video series, this devotional for the care of creation, the beauty of the Earth, and so thanks for taking this journey with me and I've been part of the Care of Creation Table and it's been a lot of fun. I've met some wonderful people and I'd encourage you to be a part of it as well.

I know when it comes to talking about how we care for creation, often times I can start feeling down or insignificant and there's just a lot of bad news that can leave me to just inaction and feeling frozen. Maybe you can relate. It looks something like this.

*Hey dad, today at school we learned that 1/3 of food produced in the world is wasted. 1/3?!?!?*

*Hey dad, today I read that we last year we burned an area of the rainforest the size of Jamaica. **Jamaica?!?***

*Hey dad, I watched a video today about the great Pacific garbage patch. It's a plastic island floating in the ocean between Hawaii and California that's the size of Texas. **A plastic island of garbage, the size of Texas?!?***

Well, hopefully, actually, the Grim Reaper doesn't show up and wrap you in chains like that, but you get the picture. So often all that bad news can lead us to where we just want to pull the covers over our head, or the chains are wrapped around us and pushes us to inaction and feeling frozen and paralyzed and insignificant. What could I possibly do ? These problems are so big!

Or, often we get this message, that the planet would be better off without us. Fortunately, I don't think that's the case at all, though! There are "yes people" who can do tremendous damage. But people also can do tremendous good. And hopefully that's what you'll get from this video is this fact that you can be this awesome force for good and for the beauty of creation, being one of God's co-workers. And it can look something as simple as this.

*Embrace the light because we have beautiful things to plant!*

It really can be as simple as that - as an encouraging word from my daughter to remind me that I

can be a tremendous force for good in the world and I can be a co-worker with God and for the beauty of creation. So, I'm inspired by my family, I'm inspired by people like you - people making a difference, and so God bless you in that! For this video, I chose in the scripture the parable of the sower, where we hear about how God is a planter and how God will plant the seed of the kingdom and we also hear in scripture that we are created in God's image, and that we are co-workers with God and that we have been given a special responsibility. We've been given dominion to care for creation, so it's very much a part of our identity and our purpose.

Sometimes I hear people say, I don't have a green thumb and I am sure that they were told that, or exactly where it's coming from - who knows? But it always makes me sad to hear that because I don't think it's true and I don't think it's helpful. In fact, I would say that you are born

to plant! It is part of who you are very much, just part of your purpose as a co-worker with God, born to plant. And so don't let anyone tell you you don't have a green thumb. It is absolutely not true!

I was at the state fair this year and I was really moved by a project that I ran across. I was in the 4H building and I was going through the projects. My son had a couple things down there this year. And I came upon this one and this student and they were 12 years old and it had a list. And it would have said, these are the trees that I have planted this year. And then it went on to list, it was like 127, and they were all sorts of different types of trees. And it got me thinking about my list and how I measure my year, right? How many trees had I planted? And what was my plan for this next year? This list of what I'm going to plant, and so that's the question I'd like to leave with you. What are you going to plant this year? Because that is, I think, how we can measure if it's a successful one. What are you planting, because know that you are born to plant and that you can make a tremendous difference. God bless you.