

(Photo credit: By Lamborghini 1R - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=116038893>)



Dear Friends,

Sorry for going on about Clarkson's Farm last Sunday, but our family are all watching it at the moment and enjoying its blend of farming life and Jeremy Clarkson's foolishness – not to mention all the other personalities; farm manager Kaleb Cooper, land agent "Cheerful" Charlie Ireland, Clarkson's partner Lisa Hogan, and stone-waller Gerald Cooper.

One of the main 'teaching points' of the show, however, is just how challenging it is to make a living as a farmer in the UK today. One of the astonishing statistics from the first series was that Clarkson made a profit of only £144 after his full year of farming. *(Note: That figure was impacted by startup costs – and expensive mistakes – such as his Lamborghini tractor, but it is also a reflection of the challenges farmers face.)* And yet, what Clarkson also keeps coming back to is that farmers persevere, not because of profits, but because they love farming.

We could also apply that to the Sower in Sunday's reading – Matthew 13: 1-9, 18-23. Perhaps he too persevered with farming – despite some of the poor results - because he loved farming.

I am thinking of a pastor of another Baptist church here in Canberra a few years ago who was constantly mocking Canberrans. "Bunch of champagne socialists," he would say, or "Latte-sipping lefties!"

Two things always struck me about those comments: one; they were such oversimplifications, and two; what was he doing, ministering in Canberra, if he didn't like Canberrans?

He was always insisting that the churches of our region should organise more evangelistic activities, but as well as not warming to his methods or version of the gospel message, I felt that working with someone who was trying to evangelise a community he didn't genuinely love would be very hard.

Sowers need to love sowing. Farmers need to love farming. And we who love God are called to love the people God loves; the people God wants to give life and hope to in God's kingdom.

I love the last line of Sunday's final hymn, "...most of all that love has found us, thanks be to God."

We are part of sowing this astounding and confounding love. Thanks be to God!

Grace and peace,

Belinda