

Parables - The Seed

Do you know that the kingdom of God is? Paul tells us in Romans 14 that it is righteousness, peace, and joy, in the Holy Spirit. These are three things that we can ONLY get through Jesus. Any other version is a temporary imposter.

Other things the Word says about the kingdom of God - it's at hand (near), it's within you, it suffers violence, it's not of this world, without being born again you can't even see it. But it's the Father's pleasure to give it to you!

Today's parables are about the seed. In this parable of the seed, Jesus is showing us what the kingdom of God is like.

Mark 4:26-29 (HCSB)

"The kingdom of God is like this," He said. "A man scatters seed on the ground; 27 he sleeps and rises—night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows—he doesn't know how. 28 The soil produces a crop by itself—first the blade, then the head, and then the ripe grain on the head. 29 But as soon as the crop is ready, he sends for the sickle, because the harvest has come."

We have a man - you and me, Christians. We have the seed - the gospel, God's Word. And we have the soil - the hearts of people.

It begins with a man scattering seed or better explained as throwing it around. It's not that he is using any real skill or method. There wasn't a big planning session after hours of YouTube videos. He didn't take a class on it. He just took the seed that he had...and went outside and tossed it around.

Who didn't do this as a kid with watermelons or pumpkins? I did it, my kids did it. The dad has to mow around it because the kid wants to see it grow...they think they are going to have a watermelon farm and never run out of watermelon again...but it starts with scattering the seed. I never tilled the ground or even watered it.

After this man scattered the seed guess what he does...sleeps and rises, night and day. He went on with life. He didn't sit there and stare at the seed and demand it to grow. He doesn't fertilize it, doesn't pull weeds around it, doesn't water it...he just threw it out there and let it be...left it to do whatever it would do.

Then something happens! The seed sprouts and grows - he doesn't know how it happened.

But Jesus tells us how. The soil produced it by itself. See the seed grows on it's own, not by the skill of the planter. Sure there are things you CAN do that can help the seed along, but...

This seed, it lands on the soil and it already contains in itself the **potential for life**, for an abundant harvest.

And when it's ready someone gets to harvest it.

The gospel of Jesus Christ. It contains in itself the potential for life and an abundant harvest. It doesn't require highly skilled planters or constantly attentive farmers to grow.

All the gospel needs is to be scattered. To be thrown out there even if you are not exactly sure how, when, where, you don't even NEED to be sure why...although if you know why, you are more likely to do it.

Do you know that it will grow? It will sprout.

Just toss it out there the best you can. Let the Holy Spirit do the rest. The gospel contains the power inside itself!

This is how God operates. You know Jesus raised up the 12 because He just needed some people that would scatter seed. And the more they scatter, the more that would grow. 12 would become 120, then 3000, then 5000. And today about 850 million (2.3 billion total "Christians" of that about 850 million Pentecostal, Charismatic, Evangelical)

In the church today, there are a lot of evangelism programs. There are a lot of teachings on how to grow the church (they all cost money, of course). There are meetings on how we could implement these plans but what we see is often a man made scheme where we spend way too much time talking about how to share the gospel and how to make it grow and we never get to the only step of the process that actually matters...scattering the seed!

So the seed represents the Word of God. Look how the Word can work within you:

1 Peter 1:22-25 (HCSB)

By obedience to the truth, having purified yourselves for sincere love of the brothers, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, 23 since you have been born again—not of perishable seed but of imperishable—through the living and enduring **word of God**.

24 For All flesh is like grass,
and all its glory like a flower of the grass.

The grass withers, and the flower falls,

25 but the word of the Lord endures forever.

And this is the word that was preached as the gospel to you.

Purified, sincere love, pure heart...why? How? You have been born again of an imperishable seed! That means an eternal seed, it's not subject to decay or death.

The spiritual life implanted by the Holy Spirit to produce new birth is unfailing and permanent. And it's through the Word of God. The Spirit uses the Word to produce life because it's the truth of the gospel that saves.

James 1:21 (HCSB)

Therefore, ridding yourselves of all moral filth and evil, humbly receive the implanted word, which is able to save you.

The Word is powerful! There's a reason we preach the Word at Connection Church. It's where the power is at. We're all about Jesus, who IS the Word. But we're about the Holy Spirit too and He works through the Word...because that's where the power is to change our hearts and lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (HCSB)

For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the ideas and thoughts of the heart.

This is what we scatter when we scatter the Word.

All Christians have an obligation to plant seeds, water them, and fertilize them by speaking of our faith or giving our testimony to others. It takes all of us, scattering as much as we can. Souls are at stake here. Every person will see heaven or hell and there's no way to heaven apart from faith in Jesus!

What is your part? Some scatter the seed (first time or so someone hears the truth) but then there's this part of watering. Sometimes God does that just like the rain comes down and waters the garden. But other times he uses us. That seed has been planted now it's not quite sprouting but the person is interested, they have questions, and you get to water it.

John 7:37-39 (HCSB)

On the last and most important day of the festival, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone is thirsty, he should come to Me and drink! 38 The one who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, will have streams of living water flow from deep within him."

This was speaking of the Holy Spirit. And this is how you water the seed. Listen to the Spirit. Be obedient to the Spirit. There are times where you don't even know what you are going to say but the words you speak are words of life that the person may need to hear. It's how we partner with God to build His kingdom!

1 Corinthians 3:6-9 (HCSB)

I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 7 So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. 8 Now the one planting and the one watering are one in purpose, and each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. 9 For we are God's coworkers. You are God's field, God's building.

We put so much pressure on ourselves. It's not your job to GROW the seed, just to scatter or water. It grows by the power of God. By the Spirit of God!

Scatter seed church!

Can I tell you this morning that WHERE is not important. In the parable of the sower, we see 4 different results of sown seed. And for each example it says "some fell". It fell beside the road, it fell on rocky ground, it fell among the thorns, it fell into good soil.

Only one of those produced a crop. One was snatched away by satan, one had no deep roots and was uprooted at the first sign of trouble, one was choked out by the deceitfulness of riches and the things of the world. But then the one that was heard and accepted into good soil (a ready heart) bore fruit...thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold!

But you see it fell in all those places. Why did it "fall" in these places, because it was scattered. Stop looking for only good soil! Scatter seed! Some will land on good soil and produce!

Here's the second parable of The Seed:

Mark 4:30-32 (HCSB)

And He said: "How can we illustrate the kingdom of God, or what parable can we use to describe it? 31 It's like a mustard seed that, when sown in the soil, is smaller than all the seeds on the ground. 32 And when sown, it comes up and grows taller than all the vegetables, and produces large branches, so that the birds of the sky can nest in its shade."

I'm not getting nearly as deep into this one, but there are just a few important facts you need to know.

If you consider a mustard seed...it's not the smallest seed in the world however at the time this was told, it was probably the smallest seed they were familiar with in that region.

A mustard plant was typically more like a shrub than a tree. It would usually get to about 5 ft tall but in the wild it could be 15 ft or more.

But THIS mustard seed. This one was planted in a garden. It was planted with the vegetables. The plan in planting this seed is to grow a mustard shrub...in the garden.

So with its location we can see the planter is probably planning to use it as a spice for cooking or for medicine.

But what happens? This mustard seed intentionally planted for a specific purpose...it grows much larger than "normal." Mark tells us it produced large branches and the birds nested in its shade. This was miraculous growth.

This could be a reason for the gardner to be upset and view the birds a pests. That's not why he planted the seed.

This parable speaks to a couple of problems we have with scattering seed. The first one is that we are often small minded about the power of the seed. Some of you are sitting here thinking "What do I have to scatter?" You have the Word of God...are you reading it? Are you listening to it?

You don't have to be a teacher. You don't have to be "educated." You have to belong to Jesus and be indwelt by the Spirit. THEN you do what you KNOW to be true.

So much of this world is operating on feelings and emotions. That is the most volatile thing in this world. They are up, then down, then up, then down. We are to get ahold of our feelings by submitting them to the Spirit and the Word!

The Word changes things. Scatter seed on social media. Share scripture. Share testimonies. Share our sermons. Then don't look at "likes." In fact turn off notifications for "likes." because they don't tell the whole story. There are people here today who before they ever stepped foot in here they told me they've been listening to our sermons online. I had no idea.

We don't know how big of a reach our "small seed" will have. It's not about the size of the seed. You may not share something that goes viral but you may share something that touches ONE HEART.

Then we have to let the Holy Spirit have His way with that seed. Sometimes we sow it with an expectation that goes unmet. We get upset or stop scattering. Sometimes God wants to use that seed to grow that person in a different WAY than YOU wanted.

You see them doing this or becoming that, or growing fast...you can't control the seed because you can't control God. You plant it, water it, God grows it. How He wants, when He wants, for what He wants.

Stop trying to control. Just scatter seed and trust Jesus!