

Scattering Seed for Harvest

Mark 4:26 – 29

I. Intro

- A. Today, a parable; description of growth process of fruitful seed planted told in parable v. 1 – 20; this parable Jesus uses to reveal what the kingdom of God is like (v. 26)
- B. Give meaning of analogy used: seed – Gospel, Word of God; ground – people’s fertile hearts, willingness to receive the Word (seed) – can be an individual person or the church (body of Christ) collectively (use both applications today)
- C. **Main Point:** When seed of Gospel is planted, and takes root in people’s hearts, growth is sure/inevitable; vitally important – must be planting and taking root
- D. **Illustration:** Our attempt at growing vegetables; planting and a long time before fruit production (tomatoes, peppers, zucchini, okra), being impatient, we don’t know how or what we’re doing, discussion on when okra is ready, etc.
- E. Just as growing a garden takes patience, so does growth of God’s people; not speaking of numerical growth, but focus on spiritual growth
- F. **READ Mark 4:26 – 29**
- G. Look at activity for the growth, mystery of the growth, maturity from the growth; again, how this applies to each person individually in their spiritual growth, and how this applies to the church in it’s growth; talking about discipleship – focus starting next year

II. Activity for the Growth

- A. Doing initial prep for growing anything is hard work; first, needs to be a need, person must have motivation to meet the need
 - i. **Illustration:** Need to plant our garden because of Covid
- B. The desperate need for Gospel to be planted in our community, our homes, state/nation/all over the world
- C. **John 4:35-36 (ESV)**

35 Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, then comes the harvest’? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest.
36 Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together.
- D. **Matthew 9:37-38 (ESV)**

37 Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few;

38 therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

- E. **The Activity – Sowing/planting; Jesus describes it as *a man [scattering] seed on the ground*; a person will never reap a harvest of fruit/vegetables unless they first plant the seed; for a person, or church, to even begin to grow spiritually/reap spiritual fruit the seed of the Gospel has to first be planted**
 - i. **We can’t expect a person apart from Christ to be saved unless the Gospel is presented to them**
 - ii. **Romans 10:13-14 (ESV)**
 - 13 For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”
 - 14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?
- F. **Another part of activity – waiting; REFER v. 27; the soil is prepared, the seed planted, now the waiting; NOTICE – what the sower does after planting – *He sleeps and rises night and day* – the sower doesn’t bring the growth, God does**
 - i. **Will be some work required throughout the waiting process – keep bugs/weeds away, nourishing – water, fertilizer, etc.; same with planting the Gospel – needs to be nourished with prayer**
 - ii. **Reaping a harvest, including spiritual, won’t happen overnight; requires patience and trust, God will eventually provide the fruit if we are faithful to do our part as the sowers**
- G. **Last part of activity – hoping; when farmer plants, does all the necessary work to nourish the plant, hopes for a bountiful harvest – but, the amount of the yield is out of his control**
 - i. **Same for people of God, we have no ability to save, we have no control over the harvest – again, we do our part/what we’re called to do, we bathe our efforts in prayer, trust/hope in the power/sovereignty of God to bring the harvest and the growth**

III. **Mystery of the Growth**

- A. **Jesus’ says – REFER v. 28**
- B. **Mystery of germination – seed is planted, with right temperature and moisture eventually process of germination takes place and plant begins to sprout up**
 - i. **germination – process from seed/spore to plant, seed taking root (SHOW VIDEO)**
 - ii. **Germination occurs after a period of dormancy**
 - iii. **Same with sowing the Gospel – we desperately want our efforts to be “fruitful”; but only the Holy Spirit can prepare a person’s heart**

- (and the hearts of the people of a church) and cause that Gospel seed to germinate starting the growing process, producing life
- C. **Mystery of development** – ... *first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear*; for the sower/planter a lot of faith and trust required here – “*I’m gonna plant, do the necessary things after planting, then just trust that eventually a plant will develop, then the fruit will start to appear on the plant*”; the planter has no physical control or hand in the actual germinating/sprouting of the plant
 - i. **Question:** Those that are farmers/gardeners, how many times have you planted a seed that turned out to be a “dud”? Just because a seed is planted doesn’t mean that it will produce
 - ii. When planting the seed of the Gospel, germination is possible but won’t always occur, germination/sprouting/birthing must be expected – we encourage the person in the faith, we invest in them, but only the Lord brings the developing
 - D. **Mystery of the gain** – as the sower sows; trusts the process of germination/beginning of growth, patiently waits doing all the necessary in-between tasks of watering/nourishing/spraying/weeding, eventually a harvest of fruit/vegetable is received
 - i. As Gospel sown, we do all we can to nurture/equip a young believer helping them mature spiritually and produce spiritual fruit – *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control* (Galatians 5), but we actually have no control/power over that maturing, that alone is the work of the Lord
 - E. **Summarize: Activity for the Growth** – sowing/planting, waiting, hoping; **Mystery of the Growth** – germination, developing, gain

IV. **Maturity from the Growth**

- A. **The end goal when sowing/planting; same end goal when presenting the Gospel**
- B. **Once maturity has been reached, then it’s time for harvesting; REFER v. 29**
- C. **Three things involved in reaching maturity**
 - i. **1** – **Patience**; the produce will be no good if harvested before it’s ready; Jesus said, *when the grain is ripe*; trying to reap a harvest before fruit is ready will also not produce the yield hoped for
 - a) A person may make a profession of faith in Christ, but yet lack conviction and real understanding of true conversion because the spiritual harvest wasn’t “ripe” yet; ultimately, many in this situation fall back into old life of sin
 - b) Why I believe the statement, “*Once saved, if truly saved, always saved!*”

- ii. **2** – Prudence/diligence; sower/planter only has certain amount of time to reap the harvest; wait too long, the harvest becomes rotten and dies
 - iii. **3** – Providence; if we do what we're supposed to do, then God will do what He's supposed to do
 - a) Nowhere in passage is there insinuation of laziness on part of the sower – he's faithful to sow and labor, but the end result is out of his control
 - b) The Lord expects us to faithfully sow the Gospel seed, and labor to ensure the seed takes root and begins to develop, but the actual developing and maturing is out of our hands; that's the work of God's sovereign grace and providence
 - c) He will produce bring forth the fruit and take care of the harvest according to His will
- D. To be clear, this not only applies to the life of an individual, but also applies to life of God's church

V. Close

- A. When planting/scattering seed of the Gospel of Christ ...
 - i. Activity for Growth involves planting, waiting, and the hoping
 - ii. Mystery of Growth involves trusting in process germination (seed taking root), developing of Gospel seed, and the gain (yield)
 - iii. Maturity from the Growth involves patience, prudence, and finally the providence of Almighty God
- B. Before closing, plant a Gospel seed; Jesus loves you, died for you to pay price for your sin, rose again so the you might live; admit sinfulness, believe He is God's Son and in His death and resurrection, confess Him as your personal Lord and Savior; trust the Lord that He will cause the seed to take root in your life, and cause it to develop bear fruit, and brings you to point of maturity, ready for harvesting
- C. For the church, my prayer is we become a body full of Gospel planters with great expectation that the Lord will produce the growth – spiritually and numerically for His honor and glory