

Daily Bible Study

“The Secret Growing Seed”

Mark 4:26-29

March 7-13, 2010

THE LORD’S DAY & MONDAY – This week as we come to our text found in **Mark 4:26-29** we return again to an agricultural theme as we get some further elaboration on The Parable of The Soils and the issues concerning *Soil*, *Seed*, and *Sowing*. Only Mark records this particular Parable of our Lord which is often called The Parable of The Growing Seed or The Parable of The Seed Growing in Secret. In this text Jesus adds some details to the *Seed* growing in the *good ground* as He elaborates and teaches on what takes place in secret, without the help of man, as the *Seed* of the *Word of God* works in the heart and mind of individuals and then produces spiritual growth stemming from the inherent power of the *Seed*. It teaches the seeming imperceptible growth of the Word which has been sown in the human heart, and it traces it from its very earliest stages in development to its maturing and ripening into the fruit of practical righteousness. This parable also seems to stress in a greater degree the Sovereignty of God in the entire process of salvation and growth. On the other hand, The Parable of The Soils, not discarding in any way or manner the sovereign work of God in salvation served more as a warning, a call for man to listen, hear, and respond; thus emphasizing what we refer to as “human responsibility”. This is a short portion of Scripture but the truth that it teaches is vitally important and it serves as a great reminder, exhortation and encouragement to us regarding our efforts of preaching the Gospel (both to the saved and the unsaved) as well as the what, how, and when relative to our expectancy from that preaching. Let’s begin looking specifically at our text. **Mark 4:26**: “And He said, “*The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground...*” In this verse we are brought immediately back to all the imagery that we saw in **Mark 4:1-20**. We must take note here in this text the *man* who is mentioned as *scattering seed on the ground* is NOT Jesus but those of us who are His disciples, slaves, ministers of His Word and Gospel message. In **Matthew 13:37**, explaining The Parables of the Wheat and Tares Jesus said He was *the one who sows the good seed*. But we understand us as Jesus followers to be the *sowers* in the text before us for this *man* is said to *sleep* and *he himself does not know how* the seed grows. This description accurately fits us as finite men rather than The Lord Jesus who is very much aware and in control of the growing process. So we learn that we are sent out to *scatter the seed*; to ballo (to throw or let go of a thing without caring where it falls). The Greek word that is used here describes very well the liberty, generosity and widespread nature with which we should approach the scattering of the Word of God and the Gospel message. Read **Luke 24:46-47**, & **Acts 17:30** noticing the commands widespread coverage.

The Word Applied: *What opportunities & places has God specifically given you to scatter seed?*

Suggestion for Prayer: *Father, help me to faithfully & obediently scatter the seed of the Gospel.*

TUESDAY – **Mark 4:26-27** “*And He said, “The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how.”* Yesterday by way of introduction we got right to the point of our responsibility seen in the *man scattering seed on the ground* and bypassed a part of this text which we have looked at earlier (**Mark 1:14-15**) and also more recently have discussed in these evangelistic themed parables (**Mark 4:1-20**). The part of the text is this matter which Jesus called *the kingdom of God*. The seed is being sown for a reason; it is all part of the unfolding plan of the *kingdom of God*. Jesus said the *kingdom of God* was at hand in **Mark 1:14-15** and He called men in that text to *repent and believe the gospel* in response to the offer of salvation which is in essence the kingdom message. The concept of the *kingdom of God* found in Sacred Scripture includes the sovereign, supreme rule and reign of Jesus regarding salvation which is manifest in the life and heart of His people. It then finds full, complete fulfillment and its final state in the redeemed and transformed universe when God’s Kingdom will truly be *on earth as it is in heaven* (**Matthew 6:10, Revelation 11:15, 21:1-27**). Jesus is saying in this text that this *kingdom of God*, this rule and reign over hearts and lives, this transformation which takes place by the Word of God, is in the manner in which it grows and comes into being, mysterious to men. We have used the word imperceptible earlier and this is also a helpful definition. We, like the man in this parable are just to go out and *scatter the seed*, preach the truth of God’s Word and then we go to *sleep*. We don’t know how the seed grows, no farmer or grower of crops or a garden really knows “how” the seed grows but we see that it does. I understand that in horticulture they can scientifically “define” what is happening but they really don’t know how a seed can fall into the earth, die, and then produce life (**John 12:24**). This entire matter is out of the control of the man who scattered the seed. All he can do is trust God to make it grow. As he *sleeps* the *seed* is sprouting and growing where he can’t see it or perceive it. We can and are commanded to scatter *the seed* and we even see in Scripture we can *water it*, but it is God and God alone who *makes the seed grow* (**1 Corinthians 3:6-7**).

The Word Applied: What is your responsibility according to this parable concerning the seed of God’s Word? What does trusting God look like in this matter of evangelism?

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, thank You for making the seed of Your Word grow in hearts and lives. Help me scatter it diligently and then rest in Your power and rule in making it grow.

WEDNESDAY – **Mark 4:27-28** “...and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head.” Before moving on in our text let us make just a few more observations concerning the man in this parable and his lack of knowledge to the growth of the seed. A brief lesson in the grammar helps us in understanding this point. In **verse 26** when the man is said to scatter the seed the Greek verb is in the aorist subjunctive active which indicates a simple single instance. He went out and in a moment in time, scattered the seed on the ground. Then we are told the man should sleep by night and rise by day. The words sleep and rise are in the Greek both present subjunctives which refer to a continuous and repeated action. He threw the seed on the ground and at night goes home and goes to sleep and then rises and sleeps night after night,

day after day knowing he can do nothing to make the seed grow. He is reduced to trusting. To be sure he can go out and pull weeds, cultivate around the seed, fertilize, etc... But he can do nothing to actually cause or make the seed grow. He trusts the seed or better said The One Creator of the seed to do the work. "...so is everyone born of the Spirit" (**John 3:8**). The reason he can trust the seed is because it inherently (within itself) contains the power and the life. Notice the text says ...For the earth yields crops by itself. The two word phrase by itself is the word automatos and by definition means "moved by one's own impulse, or acting without the instigation or intervention of another, often used of the earth producing plants of itself, and of the plants themselves and the fruits growing without culture." Just look at the word in the Greek for a moment and you can figure out an English word we derive from it. It is the word automatic. This could be literally translated the earth yields crops automatically. The only other occurrence of this word in the New Testament is in **Acts 12:10** where the angel was leading Peter out of prison in the night and the gate opened before them of its own accord. Beloved, the seed doesn't need anyone to infuse power into it. It contains the power and it automatically produces results as its Creator desires. This is the power of the Word of God. It has potency inherently and the Word shows its power. We don't save people; God The Holy Spirit does through the power of the incorruptible seed, the Word of God. Read **1 Peter 1:23-25**.

The Word Applied: Think about the last times you have shared the gospel with others. Have you faithfully proclaimed the true gospel and then trusted in the power of the seed & Spirit to work?

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, thank You for such a powerful Word. Help me to scatter it properly.

THURSDAY – **Mark 4:28** "For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head." Knowing that the seed of The Word of God contains the life giving power inherently should encourage us in our efforts of spreading the gospel. God has the power to make it work Beloved and He has promised that His Word will not *return to Him void* (**Isaiah 55:11**). Even though it is God alone who makes the seed grow He has graciously allowed us to be His ambassadors and co-laborers in the spreading of His gospel (**2 Corinthians 5:20, 6:1**). Notice now as we continue the progress that takes place as this seed grows into a mature and ripe plant. Here in our text we have a picture of corn or grain as the example Jesus uses. The *kingdom of God* grows and is established on the earth in an almost methodical and imperceptible manner as the living word goes out and conquers and saves souls. The change here represented in our text speaks to the subtle and imperceptible changes that take place in a plant. Who actually sees the moment a *blade* turns into a *head* (ear) and then the kernels suddenly are there in a row (*full grain*) on the ear. You can't pinpoint the precise moment this takes place but before our very eyes it does take place. The inevitable happens; a living seed produces a living plant sometimes even growing in the most difficult places and bizarre circumstances such as in a sidewalk or out of the side of a building. The power and life in the seed grows and evidences itself in the process. This is also true of the *kingdom of heaven* as Matthew puts it. Once the *seed* has found *good ground* and God brings life and the new birth, the development and growth are seen. The growth in holiness is obvious in the genuine

believer. To be sure there are varying degrees and evidences but there will be evidence if a person has been transformed by the power of the *incorruptible seed*. This growth and progression is beautifully pictured from the Old Testament proverb. “*But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day*” (**Proverbs 4:18**). There is an increase of growth in holiness and righteousness in the life of the saved individual which is compared to the sun gaining in its brightness and shining throughout the day. This concept is true both in the individual level and also on a more worldwide level which we will see Lord willing from the next Parable in Mark, The Parable of The Mustard Seed.

The Word Applied: *What areas in your life can you point to and list real evidences of growth in holiness & Christ likeness? Are you spending time & effort in reading & obeying God’s Word?*

Suggestion for Prayer: *Father, teach me that Your Word is power and by Your Holy Spirit help me to obey it and see the evidences of growth and maturity in my life.*

FRIDAY & SATURDAY – **Mark 4:29** “*But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.*” As we come to the last verse in our text we see the culmination of this process of growth. We see that the *man (he) puts in the sickle* because its time to do so. The crop has reached *harvest* time and therefore *he* takes it for consumption. The *seed* has produced salvation and it has grown and there comes a time it is to be harvested. There are some differences in the interpretation of this verse in regards to whether or not there is an eschatological reference here. Those who do not see one would emphasize the immediate context where the disciples are being trained on how to preach the gospel and how it would take effect. They see here the fact of *the seed* being planted in the soil of the heart and slowly but surely doing its work until the time of *harvest*, when God reaps the individual by saving him. Others do see an eschatological reference to the final *harvest*, when God’s *kingdom* will be revealed in its entire splendor (**Revelation 11:15, 17:14**). There is truth in both interpretations and the lesson found in both is that *harvest* time is sure, there will be a time of reaping which will produce tangible results and there will come a time when the goal will be reached. **James 5:7 - 8** “*Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.*”

The Word Applied: *Are you growing into maturity & Christ likeness or sinfully sliding backward in complacency? What changes in your life can you make to honor Christ for His work in you?*

Suggestion for Prayer: *Father, help me live to your honor and be a testimony to Your power.*