

“SOW ON AND SOW FORTH”

Text: Mark 4:26-29

Subject: “THE MYSTERY THAT EVERY SEED-SOWER HAS TO KNOW.”

INTRODUCTION

1. Jesus has just finished teaching his disciples two parables:
 - The sower and the soil (Mark 1-20)
 - The lamp and its light (Mark 4:21-25)
2. Jesus now teaches us “The mystery of the seed growing secretly.” (v. 26-29)

Facts about this parable:

1. Mark is the only one who records this parable.
2. This parable teaches us the principle of divine life in the soul.
3. This parable reveals the supernatural working of God through the seed of his word.

Questions from the parable:

1. How does seed relate to the kingdom of God? (v. 26)
2. How does seed grow while we sleep? (v. 27)
3. How do the blade, ear and full corn affect our spirit? (v. 28)

(Keep in mind)

- In the parable of the sower, we discover how the human heart is like soil; it can be crowded, shallow, hard, or fertile. (Mark 4:1-20)
- In the parable of the candle, we discover that the oil of the lamp must be replenished and uncovered. (Mark 4:21-25)
- In the parable of the mustard seed, we discover that the kingdom of God will grow from a small beginning to a great influence. (Mark 4:30-32)
- But in the parable before us (The Seed Growing Secretly) we discover the mystery of the seed of the Word of God. (Mark 4:26-29) (And...how it **encourages** every laborer here today!)

Question: What’s the “big deal” bout this little parable?

(Remember this)

- Only Mark was given this parable.
- Mark was so impressed by this parable because of his own character.

(Remember Mark?)

Fact: Paul and Barnabas had a difference of opinion concerning Mark in Acts 15:36-41.

Fact: Paul felt that Mark was vacillating in his ministry call. (v. 8)

Fact: Paul judged a weakness in Mark’s character, causing Mark to “go back” while at

Pamphylia. (Acts 13:13)

Fact: Contention was so great that Paul and Barnabas parted ways (and Paul took Silas while Barnabas took Mark). (15:39)

Fact: Later on, Paul would ask Timothy to “Bring me Mark, for he is profitable to me for the ministry”. (II Timothy 4:11)

- Mark would remember the patience of Barnabas with him, as this parable was poured into his heart and ours.
- Mark actually was a living illustration of how important this parable really is.

The Revelation

- In the parable of The Sower and the Soils, Jesus revealed that much of the seed scattered would fall on the unproductive soil.
- This fact could discourage His workers in the kingdom, so in this parable Jesus reassures us that *“We will reap if we faint not.”* (Galatians 6:9)

Question: Why am I assured that my labor for the Lord is never in vain?

Answer: Because the power is in the **seed** you **sow!**

- And the seed is supernatural as it works in the human heart.

(The question is)

1. What kind of seed-sower does God honor?
2. What promises has Jesus given to every seed-sower here?

(First of all)

- ◆ How many of you want the Lord to use you as he builds His local church?
- ◆ How many of you want lost people to be found?

Then exactly what kind of believer will Jesus use as He builds His glorious church?

I. A Heart That Is “Broken” (v. 26)

“So is the Kingdom of God as if a man (or woman) should cast seed into the ground?”

Question: What is the seed?

Answer: The seed is the Word of God!

Question: What does the seed do?

Answer: It builds the Kingdom of God!

Question: How does the seed get sown?

Answer: God uses men and women like you to sow the seed into the soil of the heart of men, women, boys and girls.

(In other words)

- God has given us pure seed (His Word).
- Within the seed there is power and life.
- All God needs is a man or a woman to plant the seed into the lives of people

Question: But what kind of servant can sow the seed?

Answer: One whose heart is broken.

- Broken to their own agenda, their own plans, and their own ambitions.

(What do you mean?)

- I mean God alone could save the world, but God can't save the world alone!

(In other words)

- He needs seed-sowers who live and breathe to plant good seed!

Question: Why do we all support this local church in sowing good seed?

Answer: Because I Peter 1:23 says:

“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.” (I Peter 1:23) What a revelation!

- ◆ The seed is **pure**
- ◆ The seed is **from God**
- ◆ The seed is **alive**
- ◆ The seed is **eternal**

- I love to pray, but prayer cannot replace the Word.
- Prayer can only empower the Word.
- The Spirit becomes active to save people where the Gospel is sown.
- Where Jesus is not proclaimed, there is no truth for the Holy Spirit to empower.
- The Word is the weapon that God designed to penetrate the kingdom of darkness.
- God's whole redemptive plan for the universe hangs on the success of His Word.
- If the proclamation of the Word aborts, the purposes of God fail.

Question: How many of you believe Romans 1:16, that the Gospel is still the power of God to salvation?

Illustration

Archeologists have discovered clay pots in the Egyptian Pyramids. They've found seeds in the pots over 4,000 years old. They planted the seeds in soil and watered them and guess what? They grew! Why? Because there is life in the seed!

Illustration of one seed-sower

In 1858 a Boston Sunday school teacher named Kimball began visiting one of his students at the shoe store where he worked as a clerk. Eventually, he led him to Christ. That student's name was D.L. Moody.

Twenty-one years later, Moody, now an evangelist, visited London and a great spiritual awakening took place. F.B. Meyer, a local pastor, went to hear Moody preach and his life was transformed.

Later, Meyer went to America to speak and in one of his meetings a student named Wilbur Chapman came to Christ. Chapman became active in the YMCA where he met and disciplined a former baseball player named Bill Sunday. Sunday became a great revivalist

and in one of his crusades in Charlotte, North Carolina a group of businessmen were won to Christ.

A year later they decided that their city needed another crusade, so they invited Mordecai Hamm, a Baptist evangelist to be their speaker. After three weeks Hamm left town, discouraged because he'd only made one convert – a twelve year old named Billy Graham. And the rest is history!

One Sunday school teacher started it all! One brother, Andrew led another brother called Peter to Christ; but Peter brought multitudes. One woman, whose name he still doesn't know, led David Yonggi-Cho, pastor of the world's largest church (800,000 members) to Christ. **One person – just one- can make all the difference!**

God uses...

II. A Heart That Is “Trusting” (v. 27)

“And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.”

(What a power revelation)

Fact: The parable recognizes sowing!

Fact: The parable recognizes harvesting!

Fact: But the parable's central issue concerns **the process between the sowing and the reaping!**

(It's God's Word to every person here)

(Perceive what this means)

1. You can live **anxious free.**

“And should sleep and rise night and day.” (v. 27) means:

- We sow and then continue on with our ordinary duties of life.
- We can sleep well at night time and rise with joy in the morning.
- We fret not whether God is working or not! (Repeat)

2. You can live with **joyful expectation.**

“And the seed should spring up and grow.” (v. 27) Means:

- All the while we are living out our daily lives; something is going on in every heart that hides the Word.
- The power of God is being released in the life that plants the Word inside.
- There is no cessation of God's activity even though we may be sleeping or busy with daily activities.

3. You can live **without all the answers.**

“He knoweth not how.” v. 27 Means:

- As God unseen makes seed to grow in the ground, so God unseen nourishes the soul and sustains his own.
- We cannot claim to know how God supernaturally changes us, be we are guaranteed that God does change us.
- We will discover as we grow, that God's Word will conform us into the likeness of Jesus.

Fact: Some of you have unsaved family, friends and relatives, “**and you know not how**” God is going to save them.

But be encouraged: Seed sown “will spring up and grow”, so don’t give up!

(Habakkuk 2:3)

“Though the vision tarries, wait for it, for it will surely come and not be overdue one single day.”

(In other words)

1. There is the human agency (sowing of the seed), but
2. There is the divine influence to germinate and send the rain from above.
 - If there are no seeds in the soil, the rain from above is to no avail.
 - If there is no rain from above, the seed in the soil is to no avail.

(What is God saying here?)

Sow all the seed you can, and then **pray** and **believe** for the seed to spring up and grow from divine influence.

In verse 27, you “sleeping and rising” doesn’t mean that you are uninterested in God’s kingdom, it means that you understand the principle of this mystery of the seed.

(What is it?)

That the seed must be allowed its **appointed course** and its **appointed time!**

God uses...

III. **“A Heart That Is *“Patient”* (v. 28)**

“For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.”

Fact: We cannot give the increase and nature cannot sow or reap.

Fact: But if we do our part, God will do His part, and we must be patient in the process of germination, growth, development and harvest.

Question: How does Satan discourage believers who want to see results too soon?

Question: How do believers do damage to young Christians by not understanding the blade, ear, and full corn process?

Question: Why can’t some believers “keep their hands off” of other believers and leave them alone while God is growing them?

Question: What does James 5-7 mean?

“Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and later rain.”

(Remember v. 28)

“First the blade” – or the green tender shoot that springs up before the stalk is formed.

“Then the ear” – or stalk or spiral.

“After that, the full corn in the ear”- or the grain swollen to its proper size.

Fact: The grace of God at work in any heart is gradual in process (so be patient with yourself and others).

(Four reasons why we must remember v. 28)

1. When a candle is newly lit and needs to be moved it must be carried at a slow pace or it will be extinguished.
2. A fire which is almost expiring may be revived by a gentle breath, but will be blown out if the bellows are plied full force.
3. A little plant can be drowned by watering it too much.
4. You can destroy a lovely flower by exposing it to too much sun.

Question: What happens when we become impatient?

Answer: ♦ We will try to force the seed to grow.

♦ We will dig it up to see if it is growing.

♦ We will use fleshly (carnal) means to try and help God out a little.

IV. A Heart That Is “Urgent”(v. 29)

“But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.”

Fact: While we are engaged in other things, God has grown a harvest.

Fact: God, by His power has promised to produce, bear, grow and yield a harvest if we faithfully sow good seed.

Fact: We must then believe God...

1. That reaping will come!
2. That harvest will come!
3. That your labors are not in vain!
4. That God will crown our “sickle” efforts to rescue the harvest before it is past.
5. That God will see to it Himself, He will enable seed sown and watered to be harvested for His glory alone!!!

Why? Because like seed in the ground, there is hidden energy at work below the surface where seeds are planted.

Question: How does the farmer respond in verse 29 when the harvest is ripe?

Answer: **“Immediately he puts in the sickle.”**

Question: Why the urgency?

Answer: Because to delay is to suffer loss.

Question: What’s the good word in verse 29?

Answer: The harvest is come!

(In other words)

- The gates of hell cannot stop the seed from sprouting and,
- Your painful striving will turn into glorious praise!

(In other words)

“The harvest of the seed is come.” Means;

Psalm 126:5, 6 is true:

“They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.” (v. 5, 6)

(Why was Israel sowing in tears?)

- The Assyrian Army had ravaged their land and left destruction behind.
- God had delivered His people from the enemy, but what would they eat in order to live?
- Should they turn their seed into food for today?
- Or do they plant it, in hopes for a harvest down the road?

No wonder the sowers were weeping as they sowed and scattered their seed.

Sowing is the tough part

“They that sow in tears.” (v. 5)

Question: Why is “sowing” the difficult task?

1. Because hard ground may need to be broken. (The soil may be rocky.)
2. Because the weather may be inclement.
3. Because thorns and thistles may need removing.
4. Because it costs something to be a good sower:

◆ Tears	◆ Sacrifice	◆ Faith	◆ Selflessness	◆ Faithfulness
◆ Prayer	◆ Inconvenience	◆ Pain	◆ Giving	◆ Endurance

Question: What does God promise to those who sow good seed?

Question: What assurance is given to those who faithfully sow and sow and sow?

The guarantee from God!

“Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with Him.” (v. 6)

What encourages Israel (and us?)

- That all present distress is never to be viewed as if it will last forever.
- That present affliction is not the end, only a means to an end.
- That present sorrow may be grievous, but joy is promised to follow.
- That seeds we sow by faith will surely come again at harvest.
- That every believer who labors and toils will be rewarded with fruit from their sowing.
- That the joy of heaven and eternal fruit will be more than compensation for every tear sown on earth.

Amen, Bill Kirk