



THE GOSPEL OF

MARK



Sermon Series Notes

“Sowing, Growth, & Harvest” (Mark 4:26-29)

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Intro: Jesus, in order to help people understand the truths He spoke, told many parables. A parable is a story that relates what is being communicated to everyday life. We have looked at two so far in our study, the parable of the soils, and what some call the parable of the lamp on a stand. We come now to what in my Bible is called “The Parable of the Growing Seed.” Read Mark 4:26-29.

This takes us right back to our context, the parable of the soils. The seed scattered is the Word of God, the soils are different, and the potential fruit produced depends on the type of soil on which the seed is sown. I’d like to emphasize that in verse 27 it says “A *man*” scatters seed on the ground. This could be any man, or any woman. As we said before in the parable of the soils, the seed is the important thing, not who sows the seed.

v.28 Notice the particular emphasis of this statement. It emphasizes the profound truth that the sower has absolutely nothing to do with the growth of the seed. And the growth of the seed cannot be explained by the one who has sown it.

v.29 This fast forwards us through the whole maturing process of the seed and what it produces. The emphasis here is the harvest.

Three specific points of emphasis, and for me, as I have the privilege of expounding on this text, four points that I believe are needed to adequately understand and appreciate the truth of this parable.

THE PRIVILEGE OF SOWING THE WORD OF GOD

Read again from v.26, “A *man* scatters seed on the ground.”

It is absolutely amazing, and humbling, that I get to do what I do for a living. I get paid to sow the seed of the Word of God. You might say I am a full-time spiritual farmer. I take seriously I Peter 4:11 - If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God...; And James 3:1...we who teach will be judged more strictly.

I have said it many times, but let me say it once more. There is no other book in all the world like this book. And it is absolutely amazing that I get to teach this book every week.

But we all have the privilege of sowing the seed of the Word of God. And if you really stop to think about this, it is incredible!

See Acts 8:4.

Psalms 138:2...you have exalted above all things your name and your word.

II Tim.3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed...

Read I Thess.2:13

God could have done it with angels, and in the very end, He will use an angel to share the gospel with the world (Rev.14:6). But until then he has chosen to use us.

The privilege is magnified by the mystery of the growth produced by the seed sown.

THE PROFOUND POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD

Profound: Very great, intense; having great knowledge or insight; very deep.

Jeremiah 23:29 Is not my word like fire...and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?

In Eph.6:17 it is called the "sword of the Spirit." Jesus wielded it to defend against the devil as he tempted him in the wilderness. We can wield that same sword, not only to defend against the enemy, but to proclaim truth to the world, especially the truth of the gospel; See Acts 2:36-38 (context).

What the seed produces has nothing to do with us. See I Cor.3:5-7

Show video of a growing sunflower seed.

Once again, the sower has no part in what the seed produces, he only has the privilege of sowing the seed. Two words came to my mind this past week as I meditated on what the seed of the Word of God can produce.

Wonder: Marvel, miracle.

Wonderful: Delightful, magnificent

Because man has nothing to do with the growth of the seed, there is no place for personal credit, or any pride at all.

The growth of this local church is a great mystery to me, apart from simply believing verses like we are studying today. There is a sovereign element in the size of one's ministry that is solely determined by God (John 3:25-27). Noah had eight people saved after 120 years of faithfully preaching the truth, while Jonah saw the whole city of Nineveh repent. Jonah was reluctantly faithful to go to Nineveh, but even after going did not want the people to repent. What irony there is in these two stories. Ezekiel got a big crowd but nobody really listened to what he said. Three thousand people were saved through Peter's message on the day of Pentecost, as opposed to Stephen's Spirit-filled message that got him stoned to death.

The specific point being made in this parable is that we have no power to make anything grow. Our privilege is only in sowing the seed.

There is a way to grow a ministry that depends on marketing strategies & worldly techniques, but the ones who use these methods will way have to continue with these methods if they are going to keep those they attract to their ministry. Pastor Chuck Smith used to say, "If you build it, you will have to maintain it." Add to this the fact that usually the those using these methods are preaching a watered down message that fails to produce sold out and growing disciples for Jesus. They are seeker sensitive more than truth sensitive, so what is produced is at best very shallow Christianity.

See Old Paths New Power, Introduction, pp.17-18

One the foundational keys to the growth of the early church is found in See Acts 2:42a; See also Acts 6:4. It is the Word of God that does the essential work in a person's life. It is by the Word of God that we grow and mature as Christians.

I Peter 2:2 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, that **by it** you may **grow up in** your salvation...

John 17:17 Sanctify them by the truth. Your word is truth

II Tim.3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness.

Also, it is through and by the Word of God that we discover the secret to eternal life. See Mark 4:11a.

The main purpose of the Bible is to bring man to a knowledge of salvation; The vast volume of the book is about Jesus; Genesis 3:15 The seed of the woman that would crush the head of the serpent (Satan); the

seed through the lineage of Abraham through whom all the nations of the earth would be blessed; he is Melchizedek, King of Salem (peace) and priest of God Most High, who brought out bread and wine for Abraham after the victory over the alliance of kings who had kidnapped Lot; Typified in Isaac, who Abraham took up Mt. Moriah (Calvary) to offer as a sacrifice; Joseph, the one hated by his brothers, who suffered even though he had done no wrong, but after his suffering is exalted to second in command in all of Egypt and becomes the Savior of the world; In Exodus he is the Passover lamb, the manna from heaven during Israel's wandering in the wilderness, as well as the rock that was struck and provided the nourishing water (I Cor.10:3-4); he is the fulfillment and meaning behind every feast and every sacrifice God required under the Law of Moses; He is the prophet like Moses who the people of Israel are told they must listen to (Deut.18:18); He is Joshua who leads us into the Land of Promise; He is throughout the OT "the angel of the Lord," but especially noteworthy is His appearance in Zech.3:1-5 (read); In Ruth He is the kinsman *redeemer*; The Psalms and the prophetic books of the OT are filled with words about Him, many that have come true, and some yet future; Micah 5:2 prophesies his birthplace (Bethlehem); See Psalm 22:1a, 6-7, 16b, 18; Isaiah 53:2-7, 9, 12b; He is typified in Jonah (Matt.12:40); Zechariah 11:12-13 is fascinating! (read); Daniel gives us a timeline connected to Messiah that is incredible (Daniel 9:25-27). Psalm 40:7 In the volume of the book it is written about me.

See I Cor.2:1-2, 4-5

Rom.1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes...

THE PRIORITY OF SOWING THE WORD OF GOD

Many times what people are sowing is not the Word of God but simply religious things that man has made up; See Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 15:9. It happened during the OT, it was happening during Jesus' first coming, and it is still happening today.

Jeremiah 23:28 Let the prophet who has a dream tell his dream, but let the one who has my word speak it faithfully.

II Tim.4:1-2a In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word...

Often we are looking for and considering what we should share with people in all the vast array of issues that people are dealing with, and the great variety of religious beliefs that are out there. Someone recently asked me about how to answer a co-worker who believes in a Hodge Podge of religions. I said share the Word with them, and in his case, specifically the claims of Jesus. His co-worker believes that Jesus is a prophet, but nothing more than a prophet.

Islam believes Jesus was a prophet, but their religion doesn't believe that a prophet could ever die on a cross.

See Isaiah 55:10-11

Let me be emphatically clear here, don't try to accomplish the work using your intellect, logic, or personal opinion. Pastor Frazier's class on evangelism – "Always say, 'The Bible says.'" Always make the Bible the authority, and let God do His work through His Word.

And now we come to the final point of the parable.

HARVEST

There is a harvest here and now, and an ultimate harvest at the end of the world as we know it.

The ultimate fruit of our lives will be the souls saved as a result of our sowing the seed of the Word of God (I Thess.2:19-20).

Psalm 126:5-6 Those who sow in tears, will reap with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him.

The first harvest is the harvest of souls saved as a result of sowing the Word of God, especially the gospel. There is what you might call a sister parable to this one, and it is important to consider it if we are to completely understand the implications of the harvest. See Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43, (notes on this text). As we sow the seed, some of what is produced is what I'm going to call "false fruit." Only God ultimately knows who is good grain and who is not. In the end He will separate the chaff from the wheat, the chaff will face eternal judgment, and the good grain eternal life.

The Bible says that everyone will live eternally somewhere (Eccl.3:11).

The Bible says that Jesus is the only way to be saved (Acts 4:12; I Tim.2:5). The Bible says that if we die without having trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior we end up in hell (Luke 16). The Bible says that at the final judgment, all whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life will be cast into what is called the lake of fire (Rev.20:14-15).

Invitation to receive Christ

CONCLUSION

I challenge you to, as often as possible, sow the seed of the Word of God. And remember, the initial seed that produces fruit is the gospel message. This is the central theme of the entire Bible, so keep the main thing the main thing. And may the Lord raise up a harvest of saved souls in our world, who will grow up in their salvation as they feast upon the Word of God, and sow seed as well.

Luke 10:2 He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."