

“Follow Me”
A Study in Mark’s Gospel
Session 21 Mark 4:26-29

Introduction:

Truth: The greatest cause of pride and joy in heaven will not be the possessions we amassed, the titles we gained or the positions we acquired, but the number of people who are present because of our labors and the spiritual growth we helped effect in their lives.

- 1 Thessalonians 2:19 (ESV) *“For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?”*
- Philippians 4:1 (ESV) *“Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.”*

Truth of the Text: As a disciple of Jesus, I must develop a seed-sowing lifestyle that will inevitably lead to a harvest.

Text: Mark 4:26-29 (ESV)

“And he said, “The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. ²⁷ He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. ²⁸ The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. ²⁹ But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.”

Preliminary Considerations for Interpretation:

1. This parable is only found in Mark’s gospel.
2. The key in interpreting Scripture is to first and foremost understand what Jesus or the text originally meant. There can be many interpretations and applications of a text, but they must never violate the original intent.
3. There are various interpretations of the parable:

- a. The parable is a picture of the coming kingdom of God by the mysterious work of God...
 - b. The parable is a picture of spiritual growth in the life of a believer...
 - c. The parable is a picture of the evangelistic responsibility and opportunity of disciples and the mysterious process of God in salvation.
4. The birthing of the kingdom of God in a person's heart is a synergistic work of the sower, seed, soil and sovereign work of God.

The Parable of the Growing Seed:

“And he said, “The kingdom of God...”

- Dual understanding:
 1. The eschatological establishment of God in Christ over the New Heavens and the New Earth for all eternity.
 2. The present establishment of God in Christ over individual human hearts bound together in the Bride of Christ the Church.

“...is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground.”

- The “man” is not Jesus as in the Parable of the Soils, but instead his disciples.
- Notice this “man” sows “seed” not “his seed” as in Luke 8:5
- Notice this “man” is ignorant of the phenomenon of spiritual growth (verse 27). This can't be said of Jesus who is the Word/Seed in flesh.
- This “man...scatters seed on the ground”. He doesn't make it grow, he only scatters indiscriminately, randomly and liberally.

“He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how.”

- The sower sows and then goes about his other tasks.
- He is not idle, but he does not concern himself with things beyond his control.
- Spiritual life is the mysterious work of God neither caused or understood by man.

“The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear.”

- Notice that it is the “*earth*” or soil that produces, not the “*seed*”.
- Notice the words, “*by itself*”. “Automate” = automatically. The “seed” and the “soil” will synergize to grow without the continued involvement of the sower.
- Without a doubt, spiritual birth is the sovereign work of God, but it does not exclude the responsibility of man.
- God causes the seed to germinate, but the quality of the soil, (the nobility of the heart) is essential to the harvest.

“But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.”

- The timing of salvation is contingent upon the work of the Father through the seeds of truth and the response of the soil/individual.

Applications of the Parable to the Disciple of Jesus:

1. We must sow.

- a. 1 Corinthians 3:6 (ESV) *“I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.”*
- b. 2 Timothy 2:6 (ESV) *“It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops.”*

2. We are to sow indiscriminately, randomly, continuously and liberally.

- a. 2 Timothy 4:1-2 (ESV) *“I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: ² preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.”*

3. We are to sow His seed, not our own.

- a. Jesus *“...we preach Christ crucified...”* 1 Corinthians 1:23b (ESV)
- b. Truths of the Bible
- c. Good deeds that awaken others to the glory (goodness and greatness) of God.

4. We must do what we can, but wait patiently for God and the individual to do what we can't.

- a. Patience is essential. James 5:7 (ESV) *“Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains.”*
- b. There is a danger of attempting to harvest too soon.

5. We must not be hesitant to make the call to salvation.

- a. John 4:35-36 (ESV) *“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.”*
- b. There is a hesitancy in many to make the call to surrender unto salvation. We must be bold in extending God’s invitation when we sense the harvest is ripe.
- c. Evidence of a ripe harvest: Conviction of Sin, Desire for Change, Fear of Judgment. John 16:8 (ESV) *“And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:”*

Conclusion:

What are the most effective methods of seed sowing you have seen or you have practiced?