

# Lesson 252

## The Parable of the Seed

### Story Elements



- **Text:** Mark 4:26-29
- **Setting:** circa AD 28 in Galilee
- **Characters:** God, Jesus, the disciples, and a farmer
- **Plot:** Jesus explains the Kingdom of God through stories about farming.
- **Key word(s):** “he \_\_\_\_\_ not how” (v 27) – This phrase describes the farmer’s perspective on the new life of the seed, and ours on the new life by grace.
- **Climax:** **Mark 4:27** *And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.* Christ tells a story of a farmer by starting out with what he can do, then what he cannot do, and then ending with what he can do. Our climax verse is in the middle of this three-fold outline.

### Planting

1. (v 26) Jesus uses parables to teach on the Kingdom of God.
  - (a) The Kingdom of God is the reign of God in the hearts of people. God is King over all the earth (Psa. 47:2, 7) but there are many rebels against God’s rule. So, the Kingdom expansion faces resistance and infiltration, but it is ultimately \_\_\_\_\_. Notice: **Zechariah 14:9** *And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: In that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one.*
  - (b) The parables that Jesus tells illustrate how God’s Kingdom is growing, what the Kingdom is like, and who belongs to it.
2. (v 26) The Kingdom is *like as if a man should cast seed into the ground*. As with the parable of the soils, the seed is the \_\_\_\_\_ of God (Luke 8:11).

APPLICATION➔ When it comes to serving in the Kingdom, we see in this parable what can do in the service to our King: **we can spread the \_\_\_\_\_**. Charles Spurgeon expounded: “...the wheat of the kingdom needs a human hand to sow it, and without such agency it will not enter into men’s hearts, neither can it bring forth fruit to the glory of God.”<sup>1</sup>

### Waiting

3. (v 27) The farmer then must wait until the seed germinates and starts to grow. The main lesson here is that he has done what he \_\_\_\_\_ – the germination of the seed is beyond his ability to control or fully comprehend. Spurgeon adds: “**That which is beyond the range of our knowledge is certainly beyond the reach of our power.**”<sup>2</sup>
4. (v 28) *the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself* – that is, the soil works upon the seed and does what the farmer cannot do. The germination of the seed, its sprouting, and its growing, are illustrations of the grace of God working in the heart of a person. This truth lends itself to a few applications:
  - (a) **The seed will \_\_\_\_\_** – just as not every seed germinates, not every Gospel proclamation results in conversions, yet many will. The evangelizer can take comfort in knowing that God’s Word will not return void. (Isa. 55:11)

<sup>1</sup> Charles Spurgeon, “What the Farm Laborers Can Do and What They Cannot Do,” <https://www.spurgeongems.org/sermon/chs1603.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

- (b) **Growth is** \_\_\_\_\_ – *first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear*. Other than a few notable exceptions, most Christians grow slowly – sometimes agonizingly so. Matthew Henry said, “*Nature does nothing abruptly*. God carries on his work insensibly and without noise, but insuperably and without fail.”<sup>3</sup>
- (c) \_\_\_\_\_ **gives life** – it is not the farmer that gives life, *the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself*. Ryle explains: “The highest abilities, the most powerful preaching, the most diligent working, cannot command success. God alone can give life.”<sup>4</sup>

**1 Corinthians 3:6** *I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.*

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## Reaping

5. (v 29) *But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come*. After the seed has grown, and it begins to bear fruit, the farmer has another task: **reaping**.

- (a) This harvest is not Judgment Day (as in Matt. 13:30); rather, this is the reaping done by the \_\_\_\_\_. Spurgeon explains: “This is not the reaping of the last great day, for that does not come within the scope of the parable, which evidently relates to a human sower and reaper. The kind of reaping which the Savior here intends is that which He referred to when He said to His disciples, ‘Lift up now your eyes, for behold the fields are white already to the harvest.’”

**John 4:37** *And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. 38 I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.*

- (b) From this parable, we learn that the Christian is to **spread the seed** and **reap the harvest** – which is exactly what Jesus told us to do in the \_\_\_\_\_.

**Matthew 28:19** *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

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**Answer Key:** key word(s) “knoweth” • 1. a) successful • 2. Word; ➔ seed • 3. could • 4. a) grow; b) gradual; c) God • 5.a) Christian; b) Great Commission

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<sup>3</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 1785.

<sup>4</sup> J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospel, Volume One, Matthew, Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books; 2007) 75.