

The Parable of the Seed Growing

Text: Mark 4:26-29

Introduction

1. This parable is only found in the gospel of Mark.
 - a. Mark is a dramatic, moving and powerful picture of the life of Jesus so there are not as many quotations from Christ as there are in the other gospels which means it contains relatively few parables—only four.
 - b. The four parables found in the book of Mark are:
 - 1) The sower. (4:3-20)
 - 2) The mustard seed. (4:31ff)
 - 3) The wicked husbandmen. (12:1-11)
 - 4) The growth of the seed. (4:26-29)
2. Jesus taught a number of parables which concerned seeds.
 - a. The sower.
 - 1) Matthew 13:3-23; Mark 4:2-20; and Luke 8:4-15.
 - 2) It reveals there are different kinds of hearts in which the word of God may be sown.
 - b. The tares.
 - 1) Matthew 13:24-30.
 - 2) It demonstrates that not all that happens is God's will or His doing.
 - aa. "An enemy has done this." (v. 28)
 - bb. This is the kind of seed the devil is responsible for sowing.
 - c. The mustard seed.
 - 1) Matthew 13:31-32; Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18-19.
 - 2) It testifies of the seeming insignificance of the gospel and the all-prevailing influence of which it is capable.
 - d. The growth of the seed. (Mark 4:26-29)
3. This sermon will consider some of the lessons to be learned from the parable of the seed growing.

I. We Are Not Responsible for the Growth of the Seed (vv. 26-28a)

A. In the physical realm.

1. When wheat or barley was sown, men did not know how the seed sprang up and grew.

- a. They prepared the fields, sowed the seed and then went about their business.
 - b. They trusted that, since they had done their part, the seed would grow.
 2. Twenty-one centuries later, we still do not know how this takes place.
 - a. We have made great progress in agriculture: the benefit of rotating crops, feeding nutrients to the soil, etc.
 - b. We have made no progress at all when it comes to understanding how a seed that appears lifeless can grow and produce.
 3. That seed is able to grow and produce by the power of God. (Acts 17:25)
- B. In the spiritual realm.
1. The same is true with the spiritual seed, the word of God.
 - a. What is there in that word that can produce a new creation?
 - b. How can it lift, enable and renew a person?
 - c. How can it make one a real man, father and husband?
 - d. How can it make one a real woman, mother and wife?
 2. It is the power of God. (Rom. 1:16-17)
 - a. The word of God has great power.
 - b. God caused the world to come into being by His word.
 - c. Consider the cleansing of Naaman. (2 Kings 5:1-15a)
 4. The word of man has no such power.
 - a. Men can put beautiful words and great thoughts together but the literature of Shakespeare or Dickens does not effect such changes in people's lives.
 - b. You never heard anyone say, "I used to be a drunkard, then I read Tennyson and it changed my life."
 - c. The creed books of theologians cannot bring about such changes they can only make religion vain. (Matt. 15:7-9)
 5. Only one book can truly change lives: the word of God which must be planted in the heart. (Jas. 1:21)
 6. The pattern for growth of the seed is seen in 1 Corinthians 3:6-7.
 - a. You and I sow.
 - b. You and I water by continuing to teach and encourage.
 - c. Beyond that, it is up to the individual and God.
 - d. We should admonish and encourage but at the same time we must recognize that all we can do is plant and water.

II. Expect Stages of Growth (v. 28b)

- A. Often we are too impatient—with both ourselves and others.
 - 1. The farmer does not sow his seed and then expect to harvest his crop the next morning. (Jas. 5:7-8)
 - 2. If the seed is good, the soil is good and we do plenty of planting and watering, then God will give increase.
- B. We must realize that those things which are really important are not always accomplished in quick, “surefire methods” but in quiet patience. (1 Pet. 3:1-2)
- C. Growth as a Christian comes in stages by patiently:
 - 1. Studying the Bible.
 - 2. Building up one’s character.
 - 3. Learning from the examples of others.
 - 4. Attitudes and concepts passed down to succeeding generations.
- D. Be alert: apostasy happens in the same way—gradually.
 - 1. Satan can sow seed (The parable of the tares in Matthew 13).
 - 2. One does not just wake up one morning and decide not to be a Christian anymore.

III. The Harvest (v. 29)

- A. The purpose of the Christian is to bear fruit. (John 15:1-8; Eph. 2:10; Rom. 12:1-2)
- B. In the parable of the sower (Matt. 13), the good soils brought forth different yields but they all brought forth fruit.
- C. There are at least three senses in which we are to bear fruit.
 - 1. Winning others to Christ. (1 Cor. 3:8)
 - 2. Strengthening and edifying brethren. (Heb. 10:24-25)
 - 3. Growing spiritually. (Gal. 5:22-23)
- D. The harvest will come.
 - 1. At the proper season, when He determines, God will use the sickle.
 - 2. Are we bearing fruit?

Conclusion

- 1. We should be busy working for the Lord and bearing much fruit.
- 2. If the seed is planted in good soil and then watered, God will give the increase.