

# THE GROWING SEED

Jon Macon

In Mark 4:26-29, Jesus taught, “So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knows not how. For the earth brings forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest is come.” There are several important points to consider from what Christ teaches about this growing seed.

## **Man’s role in God’s work**

In this parable, the man who casts seed into the ground “knows not how” it grows up into the crop that he reaps. The New Testament frequently describes the word of God as a spiritual seed. For example, in the parable of the sower, a “sower went out to sow his seed” (Luke 8:5). Jesus explained to his disciples what the seed in this parable refers to: “Now the parable is this: *The seed is the word of God*” (Luke 8:11). This same analogy is used in 1 Peter 1:23: “Being born again, *not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God*, which lives and abides for ever.” In Mark 4:26-29, Jesus compares the kingdom of God to someone who has sown seed and in the following days the seed sprouts and grows up. But the sower does not know how the seed actually grew. He did not *make* that seed grow. All he did was plant it. Again, this is what we also see in the parable of the sower, where the sower had no control over the different types of ground and what happened to the seed in each kind of ground (Matt 13:3-9,18-23). The only thing that we have any control of at all is whether or not we will submit to God and sow the seed (i.e. speak His word) as He gives us opportunity. In 1 Peter 4:11, we are told: “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” Nobody listened to Noah aside from his own family, yet Noah is regarded by God as a “preacher of righteousness” (2 Pet 2:5), because he *preached God’s word*. We will be judged by whether or not we have done our part, not by what anybody else does or does not do (Ezek 18; Rev 20:12-13).

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(continued)

## **Only God gives the increase**

Whether the good work is teaching God's word or something else, God is the one who must "make all grace abound" to us and provide what is sufficient that we "may abound to every good work" (2 Cor 9:8). God is the one who both "ministers seed to the sower" (i.e. the opportunities, goods, and whatever else we need to be able to do a good work), and also multiplies the seed that is sown (i.e. makes it grow and produce fruit). He is the one who increases the fruits of our righteousness (2 Cor 9:9-11). Without exception, every good thing we have, we received from God (1 Cor 4:7; Jas 1:17). Without the Lord, we can do nothing (John 15:5). From this, we must conclude that on our own without God, we are nothing. The inspired Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 3:7, "*So then neither is he that plants any thing, neither he that waters; but God that gives the increase.*" Verses 9 and 10 of the same chapter continue the point: "*For we are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.* According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon." According to His grace, Christians have the opportunity to work with God in His work. But only God can make the seed grow.

## **The time of harvest**

Jesus makes another point in teaching about the growing seed, which is that after the fruit is brought forth, the crop is harvested (Mark 4:29). In several passages in the New Testament, the end of the world is described as a time of harvest (Matt 13:36-43, 47-50; 25:31-46; Rev 14:14-20). It is God's will that while this world still stands that no one would perish, but "that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet 3:9). For this to happen, there must first be faith, and for there to be faith, God's word must be heard, and for God's word to be heard, someone must preach that word (Rom 10:13-14). Jesus has taught us to pray for God to send forth more laborers into this harvest (Matt 9:37-38). All Christians ("servants of the Lord") should be "able to teach" those who are in the devil's snare (2 Tim 2:24-26; 1 Pet 3:15). We need to be like Isaiah who said, "*Here am I, send me*" (Isa 6:8).