

STUDIES IN MARK--LESSON NINE
Seed Cast Upon the Earth
Mark 4:26-29

INTRODUCTION -

I. This parable is recorded only by Mark, yet Jesus taught many lessons about seed, sowing, growth and the harvest in other lessons.

II. "I have no faith in men," you say. No faith in men my eye!

I saw you board a plane with men, and ride across the sky!

"I have no faith in God," you say. No faith in God indeed!

Why did you dig into the sod and scatter flower seed?

--Selected.

III. Take some seed (corn, acorn, etc.) in hand for illustration.

A. Ask the question, "What is a seed?"

1. Though everyone can answer, yet who can fully answer?

2. "What will a seed grow?" All know "it depends upon the seed."

B. Jesus compares "the kingdom of God" to a man who casts "seed upon the earth."

C. "Seed cast upon the earth" reminds us of several truths about the kingdom of God.

DISCUSSION -

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SEED.

A. The seed in God's kingdom identified (Luke 8:11).

B. What it is NOT: Seeds of doubt, unbelief, discord, partyism, etc.

C. What is IS:

1. Living, life-giving (Heb. 4:12; John 5:25).

2. Powerful! Illustration: "The faith of a seed."

Farmer grew one ear of corn in 1964. Result: 812 grains, which, if replanted each year thru 1969 with same result, would have produced 286,639,590,892,979,584 grains, or nearly 150 billion tons--nearly 50 tons for each person on earth! But that ear was laid up and not planted; so it produced nothing!--Personal Evangelism Magazine, July--September, 1970, p. 14.

3. True: Reliable; dependable.

D. The importance of the seed is the importance of sinners hearing Christ!

1. "Fruit after its kind" (Gen. 1 & 2).
2. "The tree and its fruit" (Matt. 12:33-37).
3. God sent Christ to make possible the "good seed" of the kingdom, which includes all Jesus is, did and does.

II. THE NEED FOR SOWING.

- A. We must sow (Mark 16:15,16).
 1. The world needs "the seed" desperately.
 2. The world must hear and receive to believe.
 3. People must believe and obey or perish.
- B. We must sow "good seed" (Matt. 13:24).
 1. The tares are doomed (Matt. 13:24-30).
- C. We must sow bountifully (2 Cor. 9:6).
- D. The need for laborers is great.
 1. Matt. 9:37,38; John 4:35.
 2. Quote Cline Paden: "Our Unfinished Task."
- E. We must be very active.
 1. Prov. 10:5; Daniel 12:3.
 2. Negligence is wickedness (James 4:17 Matthew 25:26-30).

III. WE MUST BE PATIENT.

- A. Growth in God's kingdom is gradual and Imperceptible.
 1. "As if a man should sleep and rise night and day" (26,27).
 2. "He knoweth not how." No one sees a tree grow, yet it grows.
 3. Song: "One Step At A Time, Dear Saviour."
- B. Growth in God's kingdom is orderly and progressive.
 1. "First the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear" (28).
 2. Babes; milk of word; etc. (1 Peter 2:1-3; 1 Cor. 3:1-4).
 3. Mature, fullgrown, perfect men (Heb. 5:14; Matthew 5:48; Philipppians 3:15).
- C. "We shall reap, if we (sow and) faint not" (Gal. 6:9; Eccl. 11:1).

IV. IT IS GOD WHO GIVES GROWTH (THE INCREASE) (1 Cor. 3:6).

- A. "The earth beareth fruit of itself" (28a).
 1. But not without seed.
 2. No farmer or scientist fully understands the mystery of life: germination, sprouting, growing.
 3. Whatever growth takes place results from the operation of God.

B. Yet this truth may be overstated in the spiritual kingdom.

1. Man has duty and responsibility--a vital part in the process of producing a good harvest.
2. We are "workers together with God" (2 Cor. 6:1).
3. "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase" (1 Cor. 3:6).

C. We must keep faith in the soil and in the seed.

V. THERE WILL BE A HARVEST.

- A. "But when the fruit is ripe, straightway he putteth forth the sickle, because the harvest is come" (Mark 4:29).
- B. We must also reap: There will be a spiritual harvest (Galatians 6:7-10).
 1. All will be in the resurrection (John 5:28,29).
 2. Each will be a "reaper" (2 Cor. 5:10).
- C. Will we have any sheaves to bring with us with joy? (Psalm 126:6)?

CONCLUSION -

- I. The lesson is one of trust, work and hope: To become a Christian in the fullest sense is the work of a lifetime.
- II. The word of God is still "the seed."
- III. And the power is in the seed (Romans 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:18,21).
- IV. But it works in us by faith through love (Eph. 3:20; 1 Thes. 2:13; Galatians 5:6).