

3.5.C(18).Sowing Word- Growing Kingdom. Mark 4:26-34

Read Mark 4:26-34..

26 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**.” ³⁰ And he said, “With what can we compare **the kingdom of God**, or what parable shall we use for it? ³¹ It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when

sown on the ground is the **smallest** of all the seeds on earth, ³² yet when it is sown it **grows up** and becomes **larger** than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make **nests** in its shade.”

³³ With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it. ³⁴ He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he **explained** everything. Mark 4:26-34.

Background:

Kingdom Growth:

It is no accident that in explaining the Kingdom of God and its growth, that Jesus Mashiach uses the imagery of seeds being planted and growing.

Now, as he talks about the *ways* and *structures of growth* by which the Kingdom takes shape.

For, farmers know that “growth” occurs when the conditions for growth are met: *seed* planted in good soil. But, apart from watering the seed, there is very little the farmer can do as the natural processes of life *take over the growth*.

In this way, as we learn the “secrets” of how the Kingdom of God grows and the structures it takes as this growth happens, we disciples of the Kingdom must know how we should responsibly respond and work with this growth in our relationships on earth:

- **Responsibility:** Our responsibility as disciples is to Sow, to Assess and create supportive conditions for growth, and to Harvest when the time is right.
- **Manage Fruitfulness:** And, as disciples multiply as disciples reproduce themselves,

we must know how to manage this growth rather than manufacture or force it.

But, we must never think that we have the power of *life*, to take over the process of causing growth or to factories that will profit from this growth.

Sadly, in the previous Church Age, such fleshly machinations in the end let to churches when *took over* the processes of Kingdom Growth and replaced these with fleshly institutions and curricula. For, Kingdom Growth is fueled by the very life of God. But, since mere people of *flesh* cannot capture this ephemeral force, the Churches created *close facsimiles...* that mimicked growth but lacked the power of the Kingdom's fruit.

So, Churches taught "disciplines" and "systematic theologies" to be mastered. They marketed the church so that church "attendance" and "new pew-sitters" were

mistaken as God's "blessing" and Kingdom growth, but no one noticed that the Biblical "fruit" of Kingdom growth was missing.

Disciples were not reproducing themselves; not being changed to love sacrificially and serve with a spiritual fervor; to experience the joy and the peace of the Kingdom of God where there once was chaos and hungry barrenness.

So, our words to you, who are disciples of the Kingdom with the apparatus and false machinery of kingdom-like growth dismantled. We urge you: learn of the way the Kingdom grows and do not presume that you are the "master" of this growth. That is why you need to know that the mistranslation of the Lord's commission does not say: "Make disciples of all nations" but rather, "Disciple the nations" Matthew 28:19. For, no human can "make" a disciple, one "reborn" by the Holy Spirit and who grows, as you are seeing in this series,

through a *natural* spiritual process. No man can “make” a disciple as you cannot “make” a baby. Parents couple, and the biological processes of growth then take over.

Structures of Growth:

So, as a field or a forest takes shape as a natural system, a living eco-system where the parts naturally form and work together, so the Kingdom grows naturally into *living structures*.

So, the natural structures by which we are “fruitful and multiply” as humans are family structures, so the kingdom grows and takes shape in family structures too.

The Church started and never should have stopped being a network of spiritual households, which kept multiplying and reproducing to fill towns, regions, areas, languages, and nations. For, the enduring and durably fruitful structure of households and networks of households is enough

to permeate geographic spaces and demographic populations.

The reason the former age abandoned this structure is the simple notion of control. The Flesh cannot control the *decentralized* and active network of multiplying families, nor can it profit from it or create hierarchies of power in such fraternal equality.

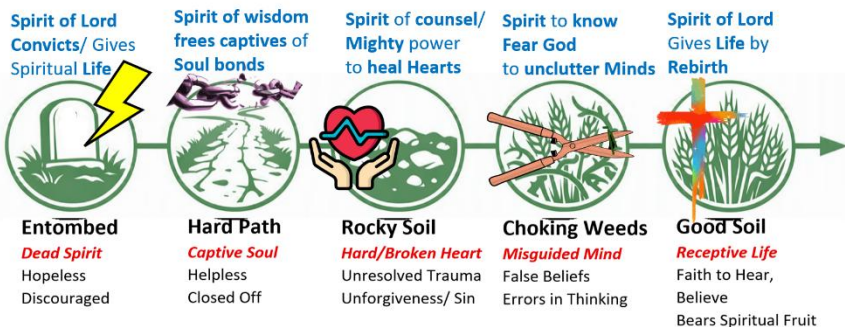
So, make it your ambition in the Next Age to only advance the Kingdom at whatever risk, sacrifice, or cost must be paid by your people. For, there is no time or need to accumulate earthly wealth or power—the time is too short. On the Day Israel is transformed by gazing upon the face of the Lord Jesus Mashiach (Zechariah 12:10) and is redeemed to bring the Kingdom to the World, there will be three and a half years of sowing the Word and reaping a harvest. And, in these 3.5 years, Israel will bring the Kingdom to all the earth—a task the Church was unable to

complete in 2000 years! But, 3.5 more years of bloody persecution follows. After that, you enter and receive your full inheritance in the Kingdom's glory!

So, set your eyes on the Kingdom prize. We look forward to celebrating your amazing Kingdom work and will await you on the other side.

Here is a reminder of the power you will receive by the accompanying Spirit as you bring the Gospel of the Kingdom to the world! Read Isaiah 11:1-3 for more.

Kingdom Ministry by the Holy Spirit



Focus:

1. Faith in Lord's Work: Plant/ Watch for Growth/ harvest. 4:26-29.
2. Faithful in small things: Small to Large. 4:30-32
- (3. Fullness Explained: Ask Lord to explain Kingdom to you.) 4:33-34

Consider:

When Jesus tells the parable of the Growing Seed, he tellingly describes the *farmer* and his role in the growth process, saying: "He knows not how" (4:27), for the Seed keeps growing even when he "sleeps" or "rises." That is, as the children of the Kingdom responsible for seeing to this field, we must not think that we have the control to *create* or *manufacture* growth ourselves. For, when a fleshly creature substitutes what we can reasonably do for the active life of the Kingdom, we end up with a lifeless, mechanical substitute.

Fleshly religion can never substitute for actual Kingdom growth. So, let's discover how the Kingdom Grows and how we can be good caretakers of this growth.

1. Watch for Growth: Sow/ grow/harvest. 4:26-29.

Oddly, we are reminded that the first step of seeing the Kingdom of God grow among us is to rest in the fact that we will never “know how” this growth is happening because it is the Lord's active work. This is why the crowds were always either “amazed” or “afraid” at the works of Jesus Mashiach among them. The Lord acts in ways that our earthly minds cannot anticipate nor replicate. We need only watch and see what the Lord may be doing. In this way, we workers in the “Kingdom fields” must simply be obedient to what the Lord tells us to do: plant the Word. Watch for and nurture growth. Harvest. But, in watching, we recognize that the Lord Himself brings growth, so

we are always asking, “What is the Lord doing now to grow the Kingdom?”

What to watch for:

When Jesus was ministering on the earth, he said:

¹⁹ So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. John 5:19

By faith, Jesus was open to the Spirit’s leading to show him what the Father was doing. Whatever you see the Father doing, wherever you sense the Lord is leading you, whatever you know the Lord wants you to say or do, do that.

Specifically, watch for so that you can join in on these works of growing the Kingdom:

- Where to Scatter Seed: Ask the Lord and look for open doors or receptive hearts to plant. Who is the Holy Spirit convicting of Sin? Who is open to hearing the Word?
- Seed sprouts and grows: At some point, the seed breaks out of the ground. The Word of God is no longer dormant but is changing life and bearing observable fruit. Watch for not only new disciples coming into life, but also learn to see how disciples are growing in their faith to approach reproduction!
- The Harvest has come when a seeker is ready to turn to the Lord Jesus Mashiach and repent of their sins. At this point, ‘harvest’—bring them into the Kingdom that they may call on the Lord and receive the Holy Spirit!

Case Study: Watching for Kingdom Growth. I had shared the story of how my Team was led to make dinners for graduate and international

students at the university of Hawaii. As we prayed for the Kingdom to come and touch our friends, the Lord blessed. First four guests joined us. Soon, our monthly meals gathered a dozen, the three dozen, with seekers inviting their friends. Soon, we had sixty people eating together at the monthly dinners.

But, the Lord was not only increasing numbers but opening hearts. Atheists started to experience God's healing power as prayers for them were answered. Cynics were moved to find out who this "Jesus" was. Some even started to pray and call out to God. At each point, we watched the Lord soften hearts.

Then, we saw the Kingdom taking shape among the people. When we were at around sixty people, we noticed *friend-groups* starting to form. Some groups were of mixed couples. Some with people with ties to China. Another was with people in similar research fields. Seeing this, we prayerfully put a disciple in each

of these groups to be a witness to them and to pray for them. The Lord was even opening a door for converts of this community to meet before dinners to worship and pray. So, if people in these little groups came to the Lord, each one could form a *household of faith* to meet and pray, worship, and read the Word together! After two years, a number of house-churches would have been ready to form. Out of the 350 people attending the dinners over the years, 60 atheists turned to God in faith, and twelve became disciples. Of these, a disciple from Japan even went home and started his own house church!

2. Faithful in small things: Small to Large.4:30-32

The fleshly heart loves large and powerful, because that is how the world operates as the Self-interested mind seeks to accumulate wealth, power, and status. So, when fleshly leaders infiltrate the Kingdom, they often plan big initiatives which will provide the greatest return.

But, the Lord is concerned with the “small,” the least, and the overlooked. For, the Kingdom of God starts small and from this small growth reproduces exponentially for a harvest!

Using this kingdom mindset of “small to large,” Jesus wisely invested his time in the lives of eleven men. Paul had a handful of young men he was raising up to join him in his ministry. As Paul said to Timothy:

and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to **faithful men**, who will be able to teach others also (2 Timothy 2:2).

Also, as we already discussed, build the Kingdom around the strong yet humble unit of the Household. As families and spiritual homegroups become outposts for the Kingdom of God, they not only can practice hospitality together but also

be a place to raise up young disciples then reproduce themselves as new households are sent out.

Think of how cleanly efficient and natural is this process of multiplying home-based households of faith compared to what happened in the previous age, when resources were poured into building great congregations sometimes with thousands and thousands of attendees congregating in lavishing facilities. Yet, lacking the intimacy and the flexibility of home-based Kingdom life, these structures often “hollowed out” and led to increasingly weak and unproductive attendees.

3. Fullness Explained: Ask Lord to explain Kingdom to you.) 4:33-34

Finally, as you and your people start to build the Kingdom, be sure to ask the Lord for his mind on any subject or issue, for he gladly “explains everything” to you as an Heir of the Kingdom.

Question:

Further Discovery:

Case Study #1: Faithful Planting:

I was called to pastor at Morningstar about twelve years ago. Coming into the church as an outsider, I first started to disciple people who already had the foundation of Jesus laid.

Sometimes, the foundation needed to be rebuilt or strengthened. But, I liberally sowed the

Word, not knowing how the seed would grow.

But, the Lord faithfully grew up fruitful leaders who have born fruit and have often reproduced themselves across several generations. Here are some in whom I have seen fruitful growth:

- Leader (N.O.-R.O>) Word- Worship-Leader-Elder.

When N.O. came to our church, having recently passed through personal trauma, had a rudimentary faith. So, we taught him about repenting from the flesh and subjecting himself to Jesus as Lord, and his zeal kindled. N.O. read the Word with his mother and sister, and he led them to the Lord. Then, his sister R.O. led a young lady hospitalized with a broken spine and legs to the Lord, and she saw her young disciple healed to be able to walk again, freed from drug addiction, and sharing the Gospel with passion.

- Elder (W.M.) Zeal-Word-Wisdom

W.M. was always faithful, prompt, and eager. We spent several years going through Mark, and he became a battle-tested Elder to lead the church through a great crisis. Through it all, his zeal and wisdom were perfected as he preached the Word to a healthy South Asian house-church.

- Planter (RC). Faithful-Word-Unity

When R.C. came to our group, he was a very devout Church-Goer. But, the Lord called him and his wife to become group shepherds, and they served as newlyweds! After a few years, he helped his father-in-law with a Church Plant.

- Shepherd (DB-ZB) Word-Heart-Multiply
D.B & ZB were already shepherds when they started learning about discipleship. Coming from a church background, DB struggled with seeing life-change in his people, who themselves were often not interested in walking with the Lord as disciples. But, DB & ZB remained faithful, even in the midst of personal tragedy, as their grandchildren themselves were drawn into the world.

- Overseer (RR) Devout-Word-Instruct
Having a solid Biblical foundation, RR started out very legalistically, so the discipleship curriculum helped him recenter his faith on the Lord Jesus himself rather than on any doctrine or theology.

- Mentor (CD). Faith-Word-Nurture

CD is a very intuitive leader, but he has learned to let the Word direct his life. So, faithfully, he has led a HomeFellowship for people on the outside and marginalized. He has recruited and equipped with hands-on-mentoring a new crop of leaders to work with, and his labor has born fruit at last.

- Evangelist-Shepherd (JB&AB). Plant + Mentor

In CB's group were JB & AB, a couple who had hearts for ministry but always stumbled in the details and the routine of being consistently there for people. However, their Shepherd's hearts finally matured, and they faced and passed an amazing test!

When the wife of JB's friend was hospitalized in critical condition, JB and AB rushed to the hospital to pray for them. They shared the Gospel with the husband E. first, then, after A. came out of her coma, with her too. They both

turned to the Lord but were severely *attacked by unclean demons*. A. saw a cloaked figure who said to her, “More of us are coming. You have one last chance. Don’t call on that name again!” But, the group shepherds of our church prayed, and they were delivered from this darkness and are now praising God with worship songs AB taught them!

- Evangelist-Mentor (RD-AF&JS).

Among are youngest disciples are AF, whose broken spine was healed, and her friend RD, who has shared the gospel with many young men. When JS turned to the Lord, he quickly began to share Jesus publicly, and RD mentored him. Now, RD and JS will be ministering to young men their age.

- Elder-Mentor (DB/).

DB was a faithful church-goer who then got a vision for growing as a disciple. He eventually led several groups and led the Church through another major crisis as the Head Elder. The

years of ministry took a toll on him, and when his term ended, his body was depleted and worn.

So, the Word of God encourages you to plant the Seed liberally, because you do not know when or how the Lord God will cause the growth. But, when growth produces fruit, the House and Kingdom are built! There is a great unity and fellowship among those committed to walk as disciples of the Lord Jesus. But, it is the fleshly *religious* ones who are responsible for undermining unity and impeding Kingdom growth! Having their minds set on the things of man.