



THE PARABLES OF JESUS

THE SEED THAT GROWS ITSELF

Before Life Group

Read [Mark 4:26-29](#)

There comes a point in biology where I just frankly do not understand how seeds grow.

Throughout high school and even college, I enjoyed the sciences, specifically biology. While not my favorite, botany (the study of plants) remained a subject in which I did relatively well. I was able to understand the various parts of the flower and the seed. I could take a seed apart, diagram the various parts, and tell you what they were for and what they did. However, part of the process of growth is that the seed just “starts” to grow. Until that moment it was relatively dormant, but something deep inside of it kick-started a process that allowed the seed to bloom and blossom. “The earth produces by itself.”

For all of my horticultural ignorance, I firmly believe that planting trees, crops, and other vegetation is immensely important. Explaining the functionality of their growth or the fuel they use is one thing, but the actual moment that the spark of life causes them to grow, or even the mechanism of their growth is foreign to me. Furthermore, the process is largely out of my control. Whether I am watching the seeds or not, the growth still occurs and miniscule seeds germinate day and night. “He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how.”

Jesus uses this understanding of the seed to communicate the power of the Gospel in the lives of mankind. For the Kingdom of God, the word continues to work in the hearts of people, growing and developing to something beyond the initial seed. Furthermore, our role in this process is surprisingly limited. Every step of a person’s salvation, from sins to coming alive in the power of God, stems from God and God alone. Acts of a mere human, however great they may be, cannot produce salvation. Our role is not to save a person, but rather to proclaim the one who can save them.

Not Being God

Throughout the whole of this parable, it is striking that the role of the person spreading the seed is largely passive. Once the seed is planted, the work of creation and the miracle of life is the role of our Creator. There is no further activity that needs to be done, no ongoing process, and no watch that needs to be kept. The responsibility of the growth comes from God. Whether the man is sleeping or awake, working or playing, the seed will continue to germinate and grow according to its purpose.

Similarly, God makes the changes in a person’s heart and brings him to her to a greater relationship with Him. At best, our role is to serve as a catalyst for the ongoing ministry of God. It is not our ministry or our fruits that save a person. People are saved by God and His ministry is to continue to stir in the hearts and minds of

people. Our actions do not save a person, nor should we be in any way inclined to believe that we are the agent of salvation. We serve as messengers of the true Gospel and representatives of the risen Lord. Our lives serve as a representation of God in the world. He moves through us and we assent to the will of God in our lives, polishing the image of God to be more visible. Yet, God does the heavy lifting of drawing us to Himself, pulling mankind from death to live, and working in the soul of mankind.

When we put the pressure on ourselves to be able to do all things, we put ourselves in the position of God and make idols of ourselves. Only God is omnipotent, able to do all things. Our position is to be faithful in the place that God has given us and trust Him at every step. In thinking that we save people, we make ourselves out to be a god and become an idol to ourselves. While we have the honor and privilege of serving God and playing a role in the story, our goal should always be to keep God as the focus. As people observe us, our image should reflect the image of God. All of our thoughts, our words, and our actions serve not to glorify ourselves, but to point other to the glory of God.

The Power of the Gospel to Change Lives

The Gospel is the power to change lives and comes from the Word of God, that is Christ Jesus. In the parable of the seed that sows itself Jesus describes the power of the Word of God as constantly moving and stirring inside a person. It continues to take root and shape inside long after the seed was planted. Our God does not slumber, and His work continues in the lives of those who are impacted by Him.

As Christians, while understanding that it is God who saves, we have the answer to life's greatest questions. In proclaiming the word of God we plant the seed in the hearts of people and God causes the seed to grow. It is growing even though we may not immediately see the results. At no point, should one assume that the power of the Gospel is weak or unable to create any effect in the hearts and minds of those who hear it. God chased us since the day we were born, looking to bring us to Him at the right time. We are the product of the many seeds that others have planted in us. Their faith became our own, stirring inside of us so that we would and changing us until that faith became our own and changed who we are at our core.

This gift of dispersing seed is not limited to only us. We each have the honor of bringing the Gospel to the people and casting that seed. Understanding the full weight and power of the Gospels fuels our strength to share our story. Even though at times it will feel awkward, difficult, and isolating, the Gospel reigns victorious in our lives. We have been bought by the blood of Christ and have gained an understanding of the power of God to change lives. Thus, we tell the world. The word of God is a message of faith, hope, and love that the world needs to hear. Where chaos and death seem to reign in the world we live in today, when we proclaim the Gospel we can rest assured that the Kingdom of Heaven is already advancing, that God is sovereign and reigns supreme, and that He alone can save. He is our Savior, our Lord, and our King.

Discussion Questions

Read [Mark 4:26-29](#)

1. What is the concept of self-idolatry? How do we create idols of ourselves and our abilities?
2. Why is it a relief not to have to be omnipotent? How does this point people to God in the process of being honest about our own limitations?
3. Why can it be difficult to let go of situations or even people to hand them over to God? What makes this difficult? Why is this a better choice than keeping things in our own hands?



4. Who are some of the people who invested in you growing up? How did they sow the seeds in your life? Did you immediately respond, or did it occur over time?
 5. Where in your life have you seen the word of God have a profound impact? How does the word of God and the grace we have been given impact our behavior?
 6. What can we do to ensure that we are still receiving the word of God in our hearts? What can we do to ensure that we are still giving the word of God to others?
 7. How can we invest in the lives of those around us and sow the Gospel into their lives? What does this look like practically speaking when we express our faith in this manner?
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About the Author.

Pastor Daniel Burton lives in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida. In May 2015, Daniel graduated from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary with his Master of Divinity. It was here that he began to explore his passion for Theology and deeper exploration of the word of God. Daniel believes that, at its core, Theology should be fun. Check out more of his work at <http://thegospeloutpost.com>

