

The Kingdom of God
Walk by Faith.

Sunday the 13th of June

Mark 4:26-34

The Parable of the Growing Seed

²⁶ And he said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed upon the ground, ²⁷ and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he knows not how. ²⁸ The earth produces of 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."

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

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 upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; ³² yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

The Use of Parables

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.

Opening prayer:

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, our Rock and Redeemer. Amen

But privately, he explained everything. We do not have all the Word that Jesus had spoken. But at the same time, we have, we do have much more than the parables. We can further understand what Jesus was teaching in and through the Parables:

The Background to the Gospel reading is that Jesus has been teaching through parables regarding the Kingdom of God. The famous one – the Sower – Jesus explanation of the sower to the twelve disciples has been recorded.

To assist us in our understanding today's reading, I will read a portion of the previous verses:

The sower sows the Word. ¹⁵ And these are the ones along the path, where the Word is sown; when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the Word which is sown in them. ¹⁶ And these in like manner are the ones sown

upon rocky ground, who, when they hear the Word, immediately receive it with joy; ¹⁷ and they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the Word, immediately they fall away.^[a] ¹⁸ And others are the ones sown among thorns; they are those who hear the Word, ¹⁹ but the cares of the world, and the delight in riches, and the desire for other things, enter in and choke the Word, and it proves unfruitful. ²⁰ But those that were sown upon the good soil are the ones who hear the Word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.”

The reality of the arduous work it is to proclaim the Gospel. The Word of God is faithfully proclaimed, and it does not always bear fruit as we imagine. Christians – announce the Good News of Jesus in and out of season. We are to be faithful to that task. We can at times run courses to explain Christianity – which is also announcing the Good News of Jesus.

The lesson to always be learnt and reinforced is this: it is God who makes the Christian; we are co-workers with him. The LORD God takes what the Christians proclaim, and just like the farmer who plants the seed, it is God who gives the growth.

An explanation that I read from Donald English is very poignant at this time:

Jesus is drawing attention to the Divine provision, which meets their limitation. If the disciples wonder how can they achieve anything (referring to the parable of the sower), they must remember that they are not the only ones at work.

Hence we all must walk by faith. You and I have the responsibility of being ambassadors for Christ. We to be faithful to our calling. Jesus parable of the growing seed must always give us hope. Yes, we plant – but the growth remains the prerogative of the LORD God. But we must cultivate the good seed.

When Melinda and my sons were very young, I was teaching them how to establish a garden. It was a vegetable garden. The ground was broken, thus establishing the garden beds. We went to shops, acquired the seedlings and then panted them. What came up was a great surprise. The label on the seedling did not have zucchini. Zucchini were starting coming everywhere. Melinda learnt many recipes for the zucchini.

We planted, God made the growth. Of course, our seedling was incorrectly labelled. The labelling was an innocent mistake, and we still had fun.

When proclaiming the Good News of Jesus, the message must be clear, and it is not obscure.

Sadly, and too often, some within the Christian Church seek to alter the Good News, so it is in step with society. Their reasons for this action may be noble. Yet, they are in error. It is God who will take his Word and accomplish what he desires. It will never return void.

After reminding the disciples of reality, it is God who gives the growth; Jesus gives the following parable, The Mustard seed.

It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; ³² yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

Jesus introduces the parable of the Mustard Seed with the words – this is what the kingdom of God is like!

Today we are affirmed in our task that we are to proclaim the Good News of Jesus faithfully. This task reminds us it is God who gives the growth. We are not to force or coherence anyone into accepting Christ as their LORD and Saviour. Instead, we pray for them and share the Good News with them. Then trust God. It is God who gives the growth.

This week I heard of a robust Church that joy to be involved with. Again, leaders arose, which took the people down a track that was more in step with the world than the things of God. Why did they expect to see growth given by the LORD? I also know that many faithful Churches have also entered into decline lest anyone should boast.

The task is to be faithful in our proclamation of the Good News – and we do this as we walk in faith, humbly asking the LORD to bless our endeavours.

Tod God be glory forever. Amen

Resources:

- [The Pillar NT Commentary – The Gospel of Mark; James Edwards.](#)
- [BTS The Message of Mark – Donald English.](#)
- [Bible Translations both RSV & NRSV](#)