



19 Minutes With the Messiah

The Growing Seed

(Mark 4:26-29)

Jesus' Body as the Temple
The Living Water
New Cloth
New Wine in Old Wineskins
The Salt of the Earth
The Light of the World
The House Built on the Rock
The Two Debtors
The Sower
The Weeds

► **The Growing Seed**

The Mustard Seed
The Yeast
The Hidden Treasure
The Fine Pearl
The Net
I AM the Bread of Life
Becoming Childlike
The Unmerciful Servant
I AM the Light of the World
I AM the Gate
I AM the Good Shepherd
The Good Samaritan
The Friend at Midnight
The Rich Fool
The Wise Servant
The Barren Fig Tree
The Great Banquet
The Lost Sheep
The Lost Coin
The Lost Son
The Shrewd Manager
The Rich Man and Lazarus
The Unworthy Servants
I AM the Resurrection and the Life
The Persistent Widow
The Pharisee and
the Tax Collector
The Workers in the Vineyard
The Ten Minas
The Two Sons
The Wicked Tenants
The Wedding Feast
The Fig Tree
The Householder
The Ten Virgins
The Talents
The Sheep and the Goats
A Lesson About Foot Washing
I AM the Way
I AM the True Vine
The Woman in Labor
I AM the Alpha and the Omega

²⁶[Jesus] also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground.
²⁷Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. ²⁸All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. ²⁹As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."

1. In Jesus' parable, what role does the farmer play?

- He makes the seed sprout.
 He plants the seed.
 He quickens growth by gently tugging on the young plant.
 He determines the moment when the seed will sprout.
 All of the above.
 None of the above.

2. In Luke 8:11, Jesus explains: "The seed is the word of God."

What, then, does the ground/soil represent?

What does the sprouting of the seed represent?

What is meant by the growth of the seed into a mature plant?

3. When a seed is planted in the soil, it sprouts and grows to maturity "all by itself" (the Greek word means "automatically"). It does so even though the farmer "does not know how." Apply these truths to the seed of God's Word.

4. Why will (and can) a farmer plant seed in his field with confidence? After reading the following passage, talk about the confidence with which we can sow the seed of God's Word.

"So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11).

5. What is the main point of Jesus' parable of the growing seed?
6. On what basis will a farmer rightly gauge "success" in his work? On what might he wrongly gauge success? Apply this to your personal outreach and evangelism work.
7. Does knowing that the growth of the "kingdom of God" is entirely dependent on the power of God's Word move you to sit back and rest or to share the Word more zealously? Why?

For Further Study

8. Brainstorm ways in which you can use each of the following to sow the seed of God's Word into the life of a friend, neighbor, or coworker.
 - a worship service
 - a church tract or copy of *Meditations*
 - Baptism
 - conversation
 - a Bible class or Sunday school
9. Agree or disagree with the following statements:
 - The efficacy of God's Word is not dependent on the one who is speaking it.
 - Since the power is in the Word, Christians don't need to prepare their presentation of it.
 - Because the power is in the Word, congregations need not be overly concerned about the appearance of their building or the type of programs they offer.
 - More people would become Christians if our worship services had more things that excited and stirred the emotions.
 - Having more guidelines and rules help Christians grow and mature in their faith and life.
 - After a certain period of time has passed, it becomes clear whether a person with whom we have shared God's Word has rejected that Word.

Helps: (1) The farmer can do nothing more than plant the seed. (2) The ground/soil is the human heart in which the seed of God's Word sprouts, that is, creates faith, and progresses to growth and maturity in faith. (3) Like the seed, God's Word has a mysterious and wonderful power in and of itself to create life, that is, faith that grows and produces a harvest for the Lord. (4) The farmer plants his seed in confidence because he knows that it will grow; the power to do so is in the seed itself. Likewise, Christians can share God's Word with the confidence that it will accomplish what God desires—the saving of souls—because the power to do so is in the Word itself. (5) God's powerful Word works! (6) Like the farmer, Christians will gauge success in their outreach by their faithful sowing of the seed, because this is all that they can do. Success cannot be gauged by the sprouting or growth; these matters are in the hands of God alone, who produces them through his Word. (7) The promises connected with God's powerful Word will move Christians to share that Word with zeal. (8) Take time to brainstorm several possibilities for each suggestion. (9) Although God's Word is powerful in and of itself and its efficacy is not dependent on the one speaking it, pastors, teachers, and all Christians will want to prepare so that they are able to share the Word with clarity. (1 Peter 3:15). Congregations too will want to be certain that every effort has been made to remove all obstacles and hindrances to their clear proclamation of the Word. It is God's Word alone that creates, strengthens, and matures Christian faith, not the stirring of one's emotions (Reformed view) or the regulation of the Christian life by rules and guidelines (Methodist view). The Word works mysteriously and wonderfully in human hearts according to God's timetable (like the sprouting of the seed in the soil). Christians, therefore, will continue to sow the seed of God's Word, confident in its power.

Prayer

Almighty God, your strong Word created the heavens and the earth, called us from the darkness of sin and unbelief into the light of faith and salvation, and declares that we are your beloved children. Give us hearts and lips to declare your powerful Word to others. Amen.