

**He Knows Not How; Mark 4:26-29**  
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And he, Jesus said, the kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seeds on the ground. He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows. He knows not how the earth produces by itself. First the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. But when the grain is ripe at once, he puts in the sickle because the harvest has come.

I can hardly think of a more appropriate parable for us to turn our attention to today. A parable of seeds growing into blades and into ears and into full plants. This is the time of year, of course, where many of us have just recently put things into the ground that will begin growing, and we're even seeing them sprout up now.

So what more appropriate parable for us to turn our focus to? Now, of course, we're not turning our attention to this parable because it's the time of the year, but we're turning our attention to this parable because it's the next one in the sequence of events. And Mark's gospel. So this parable of the seed growing, obviously it has some very clear parallels for us.

Parallels with the first parable. The parable, that's the fundamental, the foundational parable, that gateway parable that Jesus told us. Without understanding this parable, you can't understand any of the parables because this is the window, this is the gateway, this is how you understand the teachings of God.

And so he teaches, teaches this parable of this, the different types of soils. We called it the parable of the soils. And in that parable was four soils, but also in that parable was a sower. And in that parable was seed. And in that parable was plants. Likewise, in this parable there's also a sower and there is soil, and there are seeds, and there are plants.

And so the parallels are clear and the parallels are obvious, but this is the par. The parable that we're going to see is going to be the perfect companion parable to the first parable, the parable of the soils. So the parable of the seeds and the parable of the soils are meant to go together because both of them come together to give us the complete, or at least the more complete, the more expansive teaching of how it is that we understand this.

Kingdom of God teaching for us because as we've talked before about how the parables work, how Jesus is teaching with parables, each of the parables is intended to more or less teach one general truth, one specific truth. The parables are not intended to teach some sort of comprehensive, expansive list of truths about the kingdom of God, but instead, each parable is intended to teach primarily one central truth.

And so the first parable about the parable of the soils, the fundamental truth that was given to us there, we said this many times in the five weeks that we spent on that parable. We said that the fundamental, the underlying truth of this parable is this, the condition of the soil determines the success of the seed.

And so the condition of the soil we saw there were four kinds of soil. There was the hard-packed soil, there was the shallow, rocky soil, there was the thorny soil, and there was the good soil and the type of soil. The point of that parable was the type of soil is what determines the outcome of the crop.

In this parable, we're going to see the companion truth to that. The companion truth is this, this tr, this parable is not focusing on the condition of the soil. Instead, this parable will focus on the power of the seed. So think of it this way. Think if we, , were to approach our scriptures and ask this question of the scriptures the following question.

If we came to our scriptures and we said this, what must I do to be saved? How are the scriptures answer that? What must I do to be saved? Nowhere in your scriptures will you ever find something like that question, and the answer is nothing. That's not in your scriptures. What must I do to be saved? The scriptures don't say nothing.

What the scriptures say is, Repent and believe upon Jesus Christ. What must I do to be saved? You must repent and you must believe. Therefore, the parable of the soils is teaching of the condition of the heart and to pay close attention to the condition of the heart. However, if we were to come to the scriptures and ask the same question another way, how are we saved?

Then the scriptures would answer in this way. You're saved by grace, by faith, for by grace, you're saved through faith, not of your own doing. This is not your own works. This is the work of God, the gift of God. Not that you may boast because you did nothing. It is God who saved. So if we ask the scriptures, what must I do to be saved, repent and believe.

That's the parable of the soils. If we ask the scriptures, how are we saved? We're saved by a grace of God, by a work of God that does this for us. Therefore, now the focus is on the power of the seed. The inherent power of the seed one focuses on human responsibility. It is our responsibility to pay close and careful attention to the condition of our, so the soil of our heart.

But this parable is now going to focus the attention on the sovereign work of God, the power of the seed. And so these two companion parables will come together just as all the parables in the section are working together. To direct us along this path of truth, this path of understanding. We've made note of this before, but let's just remind ourself here of how the, the progress has worked.

First came the parable of the soils and the, the point of the parable of the soils was the condition of the heart. The condition of the heart determines how your receive the seed. The seed is the word. And so there's these four types of soils. There's the hardpack soil that receives nothing at all, that the seed is just snatched away immediately.

There's no penetration at all. There's also the shallow soil that receives it, but just for a short time because there's not enough soil for, for the roots. And so it springs up to quick life, but then it quickly dies as the sun of pressure and tribulation comes out. Then there's the, the thorny soil. The thorny soil receives it and it springs to life, and there is a plant, however, that plant, because it's choked out by the thorns, which are the con cares and desires and anxieties of this world.

That plant never produces fruit, which is the biblical definition of life. The biblical definition of life isn't the plant that's living in the dirt, it's the fruit, the harvest that the plant produces. And so that

plant never produces fruit. And so that is representative of just the tears, the ta, that have this external attachment to Jesus, but never produce the fruit of the life.

But then there's the good soil. And the good soil springs up not just to a harvest, but to a bountiful, a supernatural harvest. And in the telling of that parable, the disciples come to Jesus and they say, we understand, but help us to really grasp this. And Jesus answers in part by saying to you, has been given the secret of the kingdom.

But to those on the outside, it's, it's just parables. They don't understand. Then immediately after that, Jesus moves, or at least mark places the next to that, the parable of the lamp, to correct this possible misunderstanding. The mis misunderstanding may be, well, since to us it's given the understanding of these things.

But to those on the outside, it's just parables. Why bother telling? Why bother explaining, why bother. Trying to teach these things to those on the outside. Jesus himself said they don't understand. But then Jesus gives this next parable to correct that the parable of the lamp, the lamp has come into the world and nobody puts a lamp under a basket that's ridiculous, to put a lamp under a basket.

The lamp, Jesus has come into the world to shine, to reveal, to show it's the nature of God, to reveal himself. And so regardless of, of what are, whether those on the outside, as we may think, understand or not, we are still to here to reveal the lamp. The lamp has gone back to the Father and it's now our task to reveal the Son, to reveal the Father.

And so that was the first corrective. But then the second corrective that we looked at last week was the corrective of the parable of the measures. And that corrective goes like this, that was intended to correct a possible, a very possible. I'll put it this way, a sinful presumption that because we are on the inside and we have this understanding, then therefore we always will.

Jesus says to you, has been given the secret of the kingdom, but to those on the outside, it's just parables. So we might hear that and think, well, I have been given this enlightenment, this illumination, I understand by the work of the spirit, so therefore I always will. But then Jesus comes along to say, no, no, no, according to the measure that you use will be given unto you.

In other words, if you receive this illumination, this understanding, and you won't, don't carefully pay attention to the words that I've spoken to you, then don't expect it to stay. Don't expect it to remain for the measure that you use. It'll be measured unto you. And then we also saw how Jesus follows that, of course, with the with the next saying in which the point of that saying was to, was to say to those who have more will be given.

And those who might think that they have even what they think that they have will be taken. In other words, we saw clearly that Jesus is saying that there are only two pathways. One is the pathway of increasingly knowing the Father increasingly intimate communion, increasingly fuller knowledge of God.

Or you don't, you don't know him at all. That's what Jesus says. Those are the two options. Either you are growing in what you've been given and you're being given more, or you don't know me at all. And so then that was the third corrective, the first, correct. Well, the first was the first parable,

and then the second was to say, well, since those on the outside don't understand why I bother telling them, no, no, no, the lamp is here to shine.

The lamp is here to reveal. Well, then the next one would be, well, since it's been revealed to us, we don't have to worry about. It being continuing continually revealed to us? No, no, no, no. To who? The, the measure that you use. It is the measure that you'll continue to receive it. Now comes the following corrective.

And that corrective is to, is to say in the parable that's before us, the parable of the seed that's growing and this parable is given to, Correct. What I think would be a very possible misunderstanding that because this light is now given into the world where the lamp has gone back to be with the father, but because the lamp is here to reveal the father, it now falls onto the, the workers, the gospel workers, to continue this revealing of the father to those who are even on the outside who don't have understanding, and what a crushing burden that would be, what a crushing burden would be heaped upon us if we were the ones responsible for taking this seed and implanting this seed into the good soil of people's hearts in such a way that they get it, they comprehend it, and they're moved to conversion.

And so the, this parable comes along to say, no, no, no. It's the power of the seed. It's the power of the seed that brings this about. So you see how Jesus is using each parable here, and Mark is arranging each parable in order to move the listener along, move the hero along on this path of understanding.

So now let's turn our focus to this parable from verse 26. Once again, let's just read it together again from verse 26. And he said, the kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. So the Kingdom of God is how he begins this parable. And we noticed the words there that begin, and he said, that's a, that's a clue for us.

That the context has moved from the context of this smaller group, of those who are called to be Jesus's followers. Those whom he desired, he called them to himself. So the previous two parables were given to that smaller group of Jesus' followers. This indicates for us that the context has moved back to the larger setting, the, the multitudes, the larger crowds that are here.

Some for the miracles, some for the feedings, some out of curiosity, some because they truly believe in Jesus. But it's a big crowd, a big, multiple mul, , multitude of crowd. And so back into this context, Jesus said to them, the kingdom of God is, is, is as if a man. So this parable begins in a different way than the previous parables.

It begins with the words, the kingdom of God. Is as if, or the kingdom of God is to use the King James language like unto or likened to. So there's a comparison here, and the comparison is between what follows and this idea of the kingdom of God. So a great deal has been written and said about the kingdom of God, particularly the kingdom of God in the parables of Jesus.

In fact, so much has been written about the topic of the kingdom of God in the parables of Jesus. It could literally, the books written about it could fill libraries. So we want to be careful not to open too big of a can of worms, which, by the way, I've never seen a can of worms. If you've seen a can of worms, don't open it.

But we're going to be careful not to open that can of worms to say, let's really dive into the, what is this thing, the Kingdom of God. But instead, we do want to just at least have a basic understanding of what is meant when the parable begins to say. The kingdom of God is like unto. So, this idea of the kingdom of God and Jesus teaching a parable to teach about the nature of the kingdom of God is something that's very, very common in the scriptures.

In fact, if we were to look back to Matthew chapter 13, Matthew chapter 13 is a chapter in Matthew's gospel. I'm sure you're familiar with this, that's just packed full of parables. And if we were to look back at this chapter, you don't have to turn here, but if you can, if you like page 973, if you're using a pew Bible, we find these, this phrase repeated quite often in Matthew's gospel.

It's not, it's not, , the Kingdom of God, but instead the phrase is the kingdom of heaven. But it's the same thing, the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God. We find verse 24 there that, , the, that Jesus says the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed or verse, , 31. He put another parable before them saying The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed.

Or the kingdom of heaven is like Levin, that a woman took and hid in three measures of flower or we could see down below the kingdom of the parable of the weeds as the kingdom of God. Or verse 44, the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field or, or the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls or, or verse 47, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea.

And on and on it goes. So we see that Jesus told a lot of parables, particularly in Matthew's gospel that began to say, the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God is like this. And then he makes this comparison. And so once again, it reinforces our understanding of the parables to say that, that the parables are intended to take an earthly reality and lay it alongside a spiritual reality so that the earthly reality that we see.

We can then by comparison, understand something about the heavenly reality that we don't see. And the nature of the parables is such that it's taking this earthly reality that in different contexts can teach different things. We demonstrated that in previous weeks as we saw Jesus used the same parable in different contexts to teach, teach different truths.

He uses the same parable to teach different things. He also uses the same elements of the parables in different ways to teach different things. So here we come to this idea of the kingdom of heaven, and we see Jesus using all kinds of things like a net or a hidden treasure or seed being scattered, or Levin being put into bread.

And we understand right away that what Jesus is doing is he's taking these earthly realities and he's teaching different aspects of this kingdom of heaven or kingdom of God. So what is this kingdom of God and how do we understand what Jesus is getting at here? Well, the kingdom of God. Again, we could spend a lot of time really wading into what would be a full definition of this, but just to, to give something short and concise, to sort of suffice for our purposes today, we would say that the kingdom of God is something like the spiritual realm that God rules over, which we would say to that, well, that would be everything.

God rules the entire spiritual realm, and he, he rules the entire physical realm as well. But hang on, there's more the entire spiritual realm that God rules over and is delighted that he rules over them. So that would be, I think, the best way to sort of put into a nutshell what Jesus is teaching

about what the principle, the concepts that he's teaching about is that spiritual realm that is ruled by God and happy to be ruled by God, ruled by God, and glad that God is the sovereign ruler.

God rules over all things. He rules or rules over the principalities and the demonic forces of the air and the God of this age. He rules over all these things, but most of these things are not happy that God is ruling over them, the kingdom of God. In the words of Jesus and the parables of Jesus.

He's getting at this idea of the spiritual realm that's ruled by God and happy that God is their ruler. So Jesus is likening all these things to this kingdom, this spiritual realm that is under the rulership of God and glad of it. And this kingdom, this spiritual kingdom, can be thought of in a couple of different applications.

One would be on an individual level. The kingdom of God in us as we ourselves are brought not just under the rulership of God, but as our spirits and our desires are brought to a place where we are glad at, that we are happy to be ruled by our sovereign. So we can think of it as an individual level, but we can also think of it as the church and the growth of the church and the presence of the church in this world.

So there's a couple different ways to think of it. And Jesus, usually with most of these parables, is speaking to both of those in some way or some form. So this kingdom of God that Jesus is speaking of this, this realm, this realm of the sovereign creator of the world who rules over all things yet in this age, allows many of those things which he rules over to continue to be in rebellion against him.

This sovereign, this ruler, this kingdom of God, this kingdom of heaven. Notice with me the comparison that is made is like unto a man scattering seeds. Now, I doubt that we would've written it that way if we were writing a parable to teach the reality of the kingdom of God. I doubt that we would've compared it maybe to a man scattering seeds.

We probably would've come up with something much more grandiose, much more majestic than a man scattering seeds or elsewhere, a net that catches fish or 11 that goes into bread. But in this context, a man scattering seeds, I think I probably would've compared it unto a majestic mountain that no weather front can overcome, or a majestic sea that the, the waves will beat against the shore, regardless of what anyone does, the waves will come and they will beat upon the shore, or perhaps an all-powerful king, an all wise king, who is perfect in his wisdom and perfect in his power, and all of his sub subjects are glad to kneel before him and serve him.

I think I probably would've inclined to compare the king Kingdom of Heaven to something more like that rather than a man scattering seeds. But once again, this is a reminder for us of just the humility of God. The God who, when he came to reveal the Father would come in the most humble fashion possible, not just as a lowly man, but as the lowliest one who would say others have a place to call their own foxes, even have a place that's their own little hole, and I've got nothing.

He came in the most humble fashion. He reveals the Father in a humble way showing us that that's the character of the Father. And so when he likens the kingdom of heaven, he's not, he's, he likens the kingdom of heaven to this man scattering seed. He's not saying that the, that God is not a majestic powerful God, but he's saying that this God that is majestic and powerful is humble, and he's like a man scattering seed on the ground.

Now the parable goes on to say in verse 27. He sleeps and rises night and day. And the seed sprouts and grows and knows not how the earth produces by itself. First the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. But when the grain is ripe at once, he puts it in the sickle because the harvest has come.

So once again, the parallel is plain and obvious. Both this and the parable of the soils are dealing with a sower, seed, soil, and plants that come up into a harvest. And so the parallels are clear and plain for us. But as we begin to look into this parable, let's first of all just, just, , make sure that we understand the elements of the parable and what the elements of the parable represent because there are a couple of ways that we could understand some of the, the mechanics, if you will, of the parable.

That would lead us into a couple different interpretations, and we want to make sure that we're on the right track. So there are two things I think, in the parable that are easy to misunderstand, and if we do misunderstand them, we'll be on the wrong track. And the first thing to be careful that we understand is number one.

Who is the sower? Jesus says the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of God is like unto or is as if a man who scatter seeds on the soil, on the ground. So who does this sower represent? In the parable of the soils, we saw that the sower represented at first Jesus, because the seed was the word and Jesus came, spreading the word, spreading the seed.

But then eventually that sowing or that scattering or spreading of the seed now falls to us. So we said throughout that parable that the sower is Jesus and it's us because we are now sowing the seeds that Jesus came beginning to sow. And then elsewhere we see similar parables. For example, Matthew 13, that tells us another parable about seeds and plants, and that was the parable of the wheat and the ta.

And in that parable we're specifically told, Jesus says, the one who sows the good seed is. The son of man. So I think that may be an inclination may be to think of the sower here as Jesus, but the sower in this parable is not Jesus. And let me show us why. And then it'll become important for us a little bit later in the parable to see why it is that the, the sower is not Jesus.

Instead, the sower represents for us all those who sow the seed. We could call it maybe gospel workers, those who preach, teach, and speak the seeds of the word. Now here's how we know that the sower is not Jesus. Look, once again at the parable, the kingdom of God is as is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground.

And now verse 27, he sleeps and rises night and day and the seed sprouts and grows and he knows not how. Now there is simply no way that that corresponds to Jesus. The one who not only sleeps, and we'll get to the sleeping part in just a minute, but what that's going to show to us is the sleeping part is going to show a loss of control.

A lack of control. He's asleep while the seed is doing its thing that in no way is describing Jesus. But in particular, the seed grows and he knows not how that can't apply to Jesus. So the sower here is not Jesus, but the sower is the gospel speaker. The gospel Proclaimer, the one who preaches, teaches or speaks this testimony of Christ.

So the seed that sown in the previous parable of the soils, the seed was the word. Now there is no reason here in this same context. This is only just a few sentences after that parable. There's no reason for us to suspect that Mark. Intends for the reader to now think of the seed and anything different than it was just a few sentences earlier.

There's no reason within the parable to think that, so the seed still represents the word. So the sower is the gospel spreader, the one who speaks words of Jesus, the one who speaks from scripture, the one who teaches, the one who preaches, the one who proclaims. Now, the second thing for us to understand is the harvest.

Let's, let's make sure that we understand the harvest properly, because the harvest can get us a little bit sideways if we're not understanding of the harvest. So the earth produces by itself first, the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the in the ear, verse 29. But when the grain is ripe at once, he puts in the sickle because the harvest has come.

So what is the harvest? There are a couple of options that the harvest could be for us, and the first would be to, if we began with some of the biblical language of harvest. And sickle and laborers and harvest time. And if we thought from our scriptures, what, what is a common principle? What's a common truth?

What is the harvest a common metaphor for? And the harvest, particularly in the Old Testament, is a very common metaphor for judgment, isn't it? Many places we could see this one place in particular, Joel chapter three, verses 12 and 13, let the nation stir themselves up and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat.

For there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations, and here it is, put in the sickle for the harvest is ripe, go in, tread for the wine. Press is full. So here and many other places, we can see that the prophets have as one of their favorite metaphors for judgment. The idea of harvest or the collecting of the harvest or putting in the sickle, so to speak.

So the harvest can often represent a time of judgment in the context of the parable that might represent either the end of time when Christ returns and there is the judgment. Or it might mean the end of one's life in which their works were then complete. And then after that will come the judgment of their works.

But either way, it's a sort of a finality, it's an ending of what can be done. It's an ending of the time to grow fruit, to grow grain. It's an ending of that time, and then it's the time to judge what has been grown. So that's one option, but another option would be this. And the reason I think that we're going to go with this, I don't think I know, but the reason we'll go with this is, let's look once again at the parable verse verse 29.

But when the R grain is ripe at once, he puts in the sickle. So clearly in that verse, the he is the same. He that's the sower. So once again, it just doesn't work for the one who is bringing about judgment by way of either the end of time or the end of a person's life. It just doesn't work that that's also the gospel worker.

The scriptures never presented that way for us. Jesus is the judge. He's the one returning. There are places like Matthew 13 where we are told that the angels will be the one that's the ones that sort out the good fish from the bad fish. But either way, it's never us. So I think on that basis we



must say that the he, that's the one who is putting in the sickle, the same one who is the gospel worker, can't.

This can't mean for us that the harvest in this context is the judgment or the end of one's life, or the judging of one's life. Instead, there's another metaphor, there's another meaning of harvest, and this is a meaning that Jesus picks up on quite frequently, and we are all familiar with this one. This would be the harvest in the, in the context of follow, the, follow the reasoning here, the the harvest that represents the conversion of the sinner.

Jesus often used that terminology, that metaphor of a harvest to indicate that a sinner has believed and repented and been harvested. So think about, for example, John chapter four, verse 35 through 38. Do you not say there are yet four months? And then comes the harvest. These are the words of Jesus. Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes and see that the fields are white for harvest.

Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life so that the sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true. One sows another reaps I sent you to reap for that which you did not labor. Others have labored and you have entered into their labor.

What's Jesus talking about there? Remember the context of John Ford, the context of John. John four: the Samaritan woman at the well. And remember how that story came about? Jesus and his disciples come to this Samaritan village. Jesus says, go and get us some something to eat, and I'm going to sit here and rest on the well.

And he has this meeting with the Samaritan woman in that we, in that meeting with the Samaritan woman, what does Jesus do? Jesus sows seed, doesn't he? He sows the seed of the gospel into her heart by way of her ears and by way of her mind into her heart. But what do the disciples do here? The disciples are in a Samaritan village.

With the Messiah of man, with the Messiah of God's people, and apparently all they seem to do is go into town and get some lunch. Meanwhile, Jesus sows the seed into, into the Samaritan woman's heart. And then what does he do? He goes ahead and reaps because she believes so he has sown the seed and he has reaped the harvest, meaning he has reaped her conversion.

Then what happens? She goes into the village and what does she do? She sows seed, and then after sowing this seed, what happens? The whole village comes now to the words of Jesus. Makes sense? You are reaping where others have sowed meaning. I think this is sort of a sideways rebuke by Jesus to say, here we are in a village that's never heard of me.

And you are here with the Messiah and all you can do is just go get some food. You can't even invite them to come and hear me. Meanwhile, she has gone and invited the whole town. She has sown seeds, and now you will harvest what others have sown. So what is the harvest? The harvest is being present when God reaps that soul of conversion, the harvest is, is being present for that miracle of conversion, that miracle of belief in which the center is then transported from eternal death to eternal life.

And so Jesus is saying to them, you're going to reap where others have sown. You're going to be here and you're going to witness. This coming to salvation of what we're told is old village. All right,

so there's, that's one place that we see that. Another place we see at Matthew nine, verse 37, verse 38. Then he said to the disciples, the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

Therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Clearly Jesus, there is, speaking of the context, to say the seed is being sown and the seed is about to come to harvest, but the laborers are few. We need more laborers. Laborers meaning the ones who will be.

Present for that miracle of conversion. Not that the conversion is brought about by the gospel worker, but the reaping is the being present as that harvest is brought in. Notice also the continuity of the metaphors here. Remember earlier the parable of the soils. We said the very clearly the parable of the thorny soil was showing to us that even though the plant was alive, there was no spiritual life, because spiritual life is what fruit.

And so here in the parable of the seeds, spiritual life begins when not at the sprouting of the seed. Spiritual life begins at the harvest, at the giving of fruit, at the bringing forth of fruit. Okay, so that is the two. Those are the two, I think the two key elements that if we understand those two elements of the parable properly, then the parable's going to open it itself up to us.

The sower is the gospel worker who preaches, proclaims, teaches. Speaks rights, whatever, who communicates the testimony of Christ, the gospel, if you will, the words of scripture, the communicator of the truths of God. The harvest is the point at which the elect of God, having received the seed that's now grown to the point that it's ready to give forth fruit.

The harvest is the gospel worker that's there when that moment of giving fruit, fruit occurs and conversion happens. Okay, so with that being said, let's now just see very plainly, this is going to be so, so plain, so obvious. I really feel badly because I mean, you don't even really need me to see this par because this is going to just open itself up to us.

So very plainly, what the parable is teaching us, understanding those elements of the parable, the first thing that we want to see is, first of all, what the sower does not do. What the sower does not do, and there are two things that the sower does not do that are going to be very beneficial for us to see.

The first thing that we see is that the sower does not know. He said the kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. He sleeps and rises at night and day, and there we see once again just a reflection of the Jewish way of keeping time, night and day. So the day begins at night, night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows, and here it is.

He knows no how. The farmer doesn't know, the sower doesn't know. He sows the seed and the seed comes forth into plants, into growth and, and he doesn't understand how that happens. Here's what he can do. He can correlate different things with that. He can understand that as he's sowing. He's sowing onto different types of soil like the parable of the soils.

He, he sees that there's some soil that's hard and the seed doesn't sprout into that. It's packed too hard, and he makes that correlation. He also sees that there's some seed that lands on what looks like fertile ground, but then it quickly dies so he could dig down and see, well, there wasn't much depth of soil there.

He can also make a correlation when he sees other seed coming to life, but yet he also sees thorns alongside it, and then that never produces any fruit, so he can make that correlation. He can also make the correlation between sun and rain and too much sun or too much rain, or too little rain, or too little sun.

He can make other correlations and he can predict what the seed will do, but he doesn't know how this is happening. Let's go a step further. In fact, let's go a bunch of steps further and let's say that. In spite of all of our advanced learning and scientific advancement and all of the knowledge that we now possess in the medical field and other areas of scientific study and the bio biology field and horticulture and agriculture, all the advanced learning that we know, we still don't have a clue.

There is no scientist that can explain why a seed goes from something that appears for all intents and purposes, appears like a dead kernel, and that dead kernel can be put into the ground in the words of Jesus. Unless a seed goes into the ground and dies, that dead kernel can be put into the ground and then given other certain things like a richness of soil and water.

Spring up not just to life, but to life that is identical by way of DNA to the life that it's sprang from. No one can explain that. There is no scientific explanation for it. What scientists can do is they can observe it and they can make correlations, and they can make predictions, and they can say, well, seed does well in these environments and it doesn't do well in that environment, but I can't tell you why it is.

Life comes from what appears to be a dead seed. Furthermore, let's all recognize that plant life is pretty much the most basic rudimentary life there is. And so this is true for all life, is that we really don't know how life starts. We really don't know how the seed springs to life, and Jesus says by way, the farmer here that the farmer doesn't know.

He, he doesn't know what's happening when he puts it in the ground. So we see the spiritual correlation here. Think with me of Jesus' words from John chapter three. Jesus answered them truly I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus said to him, how can a man be born when he is old?

Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus Answer. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I say to you, you must be born again and the wind blows.

Here it is. The wind blows where it wishes and you hear it sound. In other words, you can predict, you can make correlations, you can see, you can observe, you can see where it blows. You hear it sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the spirit.

So you see how Jesus is teaching the same truth there. You can observe the work of the spirit, but you really don't know where the life that the spirit brings. You really don't know how that's being brought. You don't understand this in the same way. The parable is the parable of a seed going into the ground in this hidden place where it's not observed.

But what is observed is the effect of what happens later. And there's some correlations that are made with the condition of the soil and other things, but you really don't know what's happening.

There's life coming from there, and that life is coming from the power of the seed. Or if we could say it this way, the power of the earth, that's the, the way Jesus puts it, the earth produces by itself.

So let's make sure that we see here in this parable, the parable of the soils, the soil or the earth represented what? The heart, the human heart. And this parable, the earth of the soil doesn't represent the heart. It represents God. It represents the Holy Spirit. The Earth brings it about. In fact, we read the Earth produces by itself those words by itself.

They're translating the word in the word. In the Greek, there is You recognize that word *automate*. That's where we get our word automatic or automatically, or automated—by itself. There's one other place where that word shows up in scripture. Acts chapter 12, verse 10. Peter is put in prison and then he's miraculously released from prison.

He goes, he passes by both guards, and then he comes to the iron gate that leads into the city and we're told that that gate opened of its own accord or auto automatic. What would, what would Peter have thought of an automatic door? You know, we see automatic doors. There's, there's hardly a day where most of us don't walk through an automatic door that opens for us.

We don't think anything about that. What would've. First century person have thought of an automatic door. You another word, automatic doors in scripture. What would Peter have thought about a door that opened of itself, like the seed, who sprouts to life of itself? The teaching here is of the power of the seed.

Or to put it this way, the work, the secret work of the spirit represented here as the earth. The secret work of the spirit that causes life to come from what? Something that appears to be just non-life, just dead seed. So the power, the bringing forth. He knows not how. The sower does not understand, and yet the sower is not bothered by his lack of understanding.

The sower seems to have read no books about scattering seed. The sower seems to have. No certificate that tells him he's been through training of how to scatter. He's just represented as the most unremarkable, the most bland, the most plain unmentionable man that just scatters the seed. And this scatterer of seed has no understanding of how it is the seed comes to life, and yet it apparently does not bother him at all.

It doesn't bother him because we're told that he sleeps and rises at night. So, as we'll get to that in just a moment, that indicates for us just a trusting, a resting, a, a, a not being anxious or worried about the seed. He just sleeps and the seed comes to life. So that's the first thing. He does not the sower does not know.

The sower does not understand the speaker of the truth of God. The speaker of the scriptures, the teacher, the preacher, the one who, who witnesses from the scriptures. We don't know how this word does what it does. We don't understand how the word of God this living an active word of God that's sharper than a two-edged sword.

We don't understand how this seed can go into certain kinds of soil and produce the most radical spiritual life. We don't know. We just observe that it does for certain soil types. It does, but we can't explain it. We don't know. And the sower, here's the takeaway there. The sower is not bothered by that.

The sower is not bothered to understand the mechanics behind why this works or to understand the science behind what, how this works. He just knows it works. For some, for some soil types, it works. And so he scatters the seed. The second thing that he does not do is grow. He does not know, and he does not grow.

I even rhymed with that one. He does not know and he does not grow. Look how it says that the earth once again produces by itself. *Automate* the earth produces by itself, so the sewer. He can do some other things. He can prepare the soil, he can scatter it. He can scatter it evenly. He can do all those sorts of things, but he does not create the growth.

The growth is created by the power of the seed itself. One Corinthians chapter three, verse six, Paul says, I planted. You see the same metaphor here. I planted Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. It is the the power in the inherent power of the seed itself, that when in contact with a certain soil type, together with the secret working, the secret power of the Spirit produces this life that Paul will say to the Romans is the power of God under salvation.

This gospel, he says, is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes is the seed itself. So he does not know how this happens, and he does not do the growing. So the sower understands the growth is out of his hands, and any in interference on his part will be simply interference unto destruction.

Have you ever noticed this? You play planted something you'd put in your garden this's about the time of year that, that maybe we've all sort of recently put in our garden. And you know how you put in that, that garden and, and just a little bit later you might see some, some little blades coming up, some little sprouts coming up.

Imagine if you will, and maybe you've done this, but imagine if you will, that you go and you see those little, little plants just poking up and you sort of get down on your hands and knees and you say, oh, what a, what a nice little tomato plant. Let me help it along. Let me just sort of pull it up. Let me stretch it up.

Come on. A little tomato plant and you, and you reach down and you maybe move some dirt away to, to help it get out. You sort of pull it up a little bit. What are you doing? You're killing the plant because your interference. Will destroy the plant and the sower knows that. The sower understands that the growth has to occur on its own, and any, any interference on the part of the sower is just interference unto destruction.

The sower knows what he does is sow the seed and he doesn't understand how it springs to life for some and not others, but he's not bothered by that. Also, he knows that in any type of help, encouragement that he tries to give to the seed is simply and encouragement or help unto destruction not unto life.

The sower understands that. The sower understands that is the power of the seed and is not our power to come along and say, you know, let me help the seed of God come to life in your, in your heart. Let me just help this little seed along when the parable is teaching us. The power of the seed needs to be left alone au on its own by itself.

So we see here that these are the two things that the sower does not do. He does not know, and he does not grow. Now, let's talk about what the sower does because I think this is the real, if you pardon the pun, the real pay dirt is what the sower does. Once again, this kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God, I'm sorry, is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground.

He sleeps and rises at night, and the seed sprouts and grows. He does not know how the earth produces by itself. First, the blade. Then verse 29, when the grain is ripe at once, he puts in the sickle because the harvest has come. So three things that the sower does, number one, quite plainly, and obviously the sower sows.

The sower sows the seed. He sows the word. So here we see just this, this teaching, this truth, this reminder of what we could call the staggering responsibility. The staggering responsibility that is placed upon the gospel worker, the preacher, teacher, speaker of the gospel. Truth. The staggering responsibility is without scattering, there will be no harvest.

I mean, that's plain and simple. There will be no harvest if the seed remains in the burlap sack in the sower's barn. For the harvest to come, it must be scattered. God and his wisdom has determined that is the only way that his kingdom will advance, is through the simple S scattering of his seed. God has determined that.

Through his people, through these clay jars. To use the terminology of two Corinthians four, the clay jars into which God has placed this treasure of the gospel, God has determined it is by their scattering of the seed, and no other means that my kingdom will advance. The power is in the seed, the growth is in the seed.

The special secret work of the spirit to bring that spirit, that that seed to life is what causes it to grow. Nevertheless, God and His wisdom has said, that's only going to come about by the scattering of the seed, by my people, by my sowers. Look at First Corinthians one in verse 21. For since in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly or foolishness of what we preach to save those who believe the foolishness, if you will, of a man standing for before a group of people to say thus says the Lord.

Or the foolishness of a believer in Jesus Christ saying to a coworker, just words from scripture or words of testimony tho those things that, that the world would think of as foolishness, as folly. The so sovereign God has determined that is from the beginning of the church until the consummation of the church, God is determined that is the only way.

That is the only means that the harvest will occur. That is the only means that souls will be harvested is by the preaching, the simple proclamation of my word. There will be no angels that come that spread the gospel message for the salvation of the nations. God has determined his people are the vehicle are the sower.

What an awesome. Knee block, knee buckling responsibility that God has placed upon his people to be the speakers of his word. Without the sowing, there is no advancement. So that's the first thing that he does. The second thing that we see that he does is he not only sows, but here is I think a central teaching is he sleeps.

Verse 27, he sleeps and rises night and day. Now, the fact that he sleeps, Jesus inserts this into the parable and it might just seem like sort of a detail that's thrown in there, but actually this, this

carries for us a tremendous amount of significance and importance. The fact that Jesus seems to go out of his way to say the, so the sower scattered the seed, and what did he do then he slept.

Now in the scriptures, there are two types of sleeping. There is, first of all, the sleeping of the slothful sluggard, who instead of working sleeps instead, we see that many times in the proverbs. So that's this, the lazy, the slothful sleeper. But there's another kind of sleep in scripture, and that's the sleep of trust, the sleep of relaxing, trusting, believing in the Lord of the harvest in such a way that once the scattering is done, we don't see the sower out there just staring at the ground, waiting for some, some seeds to come up.

We don't see him out there holding a, a, a blanket up over top of the seed in case it's too sunny. The sun's too hard for them or, or going out there to tend to this or, or maybe bring some, we see him just scattering the seed and then in trust and complete lack of anxiety over this. He sleeps, he sleeps the, the sleep of trust, the sleep of rest.

And here we see that, first of all, in the necessity of the sowing, we see that God has placed upon us an immense awesome responsibility. But in the sleeping we see that God has at the same time. Taken from us another responsibility, in fact, a crushing responsibility, and that would be the responsibility of thinking ourself, responsible for the success of the seed.

Can you imagine, just imagine if God were to say to you even one soul, the eternal destiny of even one soul depends on your clear, effective communication of the seed in such a way that that seed is guaranteed to sprout even one soul. Can you imagine an eternity weighing on your soul? That's a crushing burden that none of us can bear.

So God places on us the burden of responsibility to say you scatter. If you don't scatter, there's no harvest. But at the same time, God comes along and says, let me take, let me take from you this crushing responsibility of what happens to the seed after it's sown. What a wonderful thing that God has put together here.

So he is saying to us, remember Jesus in ma, in Matthew, chapter six talks to us about the sin of anxiety. It's the Gentiles. It's those who don't know God, that they're anxious about all these things, what they're going to wear, what they're going to eat, where they're going to sleep, all these things. Gentiles are anxious about those things, but those who know their father, they're not anxious about those things.

An extension of that, in fact, even a greater extension of that, is to extend this to the seed, the scattering of the seed. And we can even hear Jesus saying to us, don't be anxious. I'm the Lord of the harvest, and I take from you that crushing responsibility of what happens to the seed in the soil of their heart.

I take that upon myself. Your responsibility is just be the sower. Just be the scatterer. Just scatter the seed. I will take it from there is in essence what the parable is saying to us. Think of Ezekiel chapter three, one of those two places, I think Ezekiel 13 is the other place where we see the teaching of the watchman on the wall.

Remember that teaching where the prophet says, imagine there's this watchman on the wall and God is appointed you as this watchman on a wall and you see an approaching army, and if you

don't sound the alarm, then the blood of all the people in that city is on you. But if you sound the alarm, their blood is not on you because you sounded the alarm.

Or think of Paul to the Ephesian elders when he says to the Ephesian elders, I'm innocent of your blood. Why is Paul innocent of their blood? Because he says, I preached to you the full counsel of the word of God, so therefore I'm innocent of your blood. It's the same principle here that God has called Paul to be a scatterer of the seed, but once the seed is scattered, the sower goes and rests.

He rests the sleep, the trust, the sleep that's not anxious. Worrying and twiddling the thumbs and worrying is there, is there going to be a harvest? Is there going to be a crop that comes up? The sower knows. He knows by experience the three of the soils aren't going to produce anything but one soil is, and that one soil is going to produce a bountiful crop.

And so the sower knows this and the sower relaxes and rests properly burdened by that which God has burdened the sower with, which is to scatter, but not improperly burdened by that which was never meant to be our burden at all. When we take upon ourself the burden of what happens to the seed after it's sown.

In essence what we are doing is we are taking from this seed or the word of God, we're taking from it. The miraculous, supernatural, springing to life. And by taking upon ourself the responsibility of what happens to that seed, we are turning this into little more than just a club that we just try to convince people to join that that's what it means to take the responsibility of what happens to the seed upon ourself.

It's to essentially turn the church of God into a club that we just try to convince people to join. Hey, this is, this is a really good place to come on Sunday mornings. You'll really like it. You should come and try it. That's taking the seed upon ourself. When God says That's not your burden, relax, the sower goes to rest once the seed is sown.

But notice also that there is a certain expectancy. He sleeps and rises at night and day and the seed sprouts and grows in that. Don't you just hear a certain expectancy on the part of the sower as though he sows the seed and he knows that. Three out of the four soils won't produce anything, but he also knows that there will be a harvest.

He just instinctively seems to know that or to expect that. And here we see that the parable is pushing us, pressing us towards sowing the seed, being scatterers of the seed that's scatter with a certain expectancy, expecting the seed to bring forth a harvest. And this is an area at which all of us really could hear this, particularly me, because I'm inclined.

All of us are inclined to certain sins. One of the, one of the sins I'm inclined to is just the sin of, of cynicism. The world is so simple. The world is so closed to the gospel. People are so blind to the gospel. The God of this world seems to be so firmly in charge. They're not going to believe I can fall into that.

So can all of us. But I can fall into that and it's a sin. To be cynical about the harvest of the seed. The sower sows the seed with an expectancy, expecting a harvest to come. He goes to sleep, knowing when it's harvest time, there will be a harvest for him to go and to collect. He's expectant of this, so we see that he's properly burdened, not improperly burdened.



But then the last thing that we see is the harvest itself, is that he not only sows and he sleeps, but he also reaps. The earth produces by itself first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. But when the grain is ripe at once, he puts in the sickle because the harvest has gone. So here comes the harvest time, and he is now the harvester.

He puts in the sickle. By this, it means that the scatterer of the seed is also the harvester, or the one who is. Blessed or privileged to be present when that miracle of conversion occurs and a soul is harvested, so to speak. But notice also that the harvest seems to be a process we are de Jesus describes it as first the blade, then the ear, then, then comes the, the full grain in the ear.

So there's this process, it sort of comes up like a little blade, and then you see a ear come and then it grows bigger. And then you can tell, like remember, like the tear and that parable. Everything looks the same until it's time to, to collect the harvest. And then clearly some don't have a a, a ear to bring a harvest to bring.

So the process is described here as this coming up in such a way that everything is indistinguishable for a while. You know that this is, again, once again the time of the year where you can probably on your way home today, you most of us can probably see a field that has been recently sewn. And you look out across that field and, and you ever have like, , many times one of our kids will ask me, you know, say, dad, what is that out there at this time of year?

I'll often say, I have no idea. Because quite frankly, it all looks the same at this point. Corn looks like wheat, looks like soybean. I mean it all kind of looks the same when it's this tall. So there is this reality that there is a period of time between the sowing of the seed and the point at which the elect of God, which will bring forth a harvest.

There's a period of time between the sowing of the seed and the elect bringing forth fruit. And during that period of time they're indistinguishable. So that period of time represents this period of time in which the elect of God have heard the seed has been scattered and it's taken root, but that root is not yet to the point of harvest.

Yeah, so that would represent this time in which those who are the people of God have heard, and, and maybe that that seed is beginning to take root, and maybe there's some struggle going on in the soul. Maybe they're starting to see the sinfulness of their life. Maybe they're starting to see their true position before God.

Maybe they're starting to understand the things of God. They're not yet to the point of harvest, but they are in that sort of in between point. This is, this is a point that we see in scripture. For example, I, I think of, , the Apostle Paul. Remember on the road to Damascus, he's on the road to Damascus, and the risen Jesus comes and appears to him.

The light knocks him down, and then the voice from heaven says, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me for? It is hard to kick against the goads. Now, the goats, what that was, was these sharp sticks that they use to prod animals along. And so when the animal would kick against that sharp stick, they would kick against something sharp, and that animal would be taught, don't kick against the goats.

It's not good to kick against the goats. So in a spiritual realm, Jesus is saying, you're being prodded. You're being moved along. Saul, in the Damascus Road, that Damascus road experience was real

close to his harvest. I think his harvest probably took place a few days later, but he was real close. And Jesus is saying to him, you, you're being pressed along, you're being pushed along, and you are kicking against the goats.

Now, maybe the seed was in part the words of Stephen when Stephen preached that sermon and Saul heard it and it's resonating and he's, he can't get it out of his mind. Maybe it's other Christians that he's heard give testimony as he arrested them. Maybe it's just his knowledge of the scriptures. That he has under, he has misunderstood for so long, but now he's starting to see them plainly.

But either way, there's these goads kicking, pushing him along. He's kicking against them. And so he's like this blade coming up, coming into an ear, and then he's real close to a harvest. To a harvest. And so I see that that's what's the, the process here, this process, this indistinguishable process as he's being taken along.

And that's the same thing that we see in the progress of the kingdom of God today, is that the seed is scattered. The seed sometimes sprouts up, sometimes it's indistinguishable between seed that's going to sprout up and quickly die. Seed that's going to sprout up and then never bring fruit and then seed that's going to sprout up to a bountiful harvest.

It's indistinguishable at many points, but it's not our place to know. It's not our place to understand we are to sow seed and then reap. So finally, just to sort of bring all this together, we just see that the parable is showing us that first of all, the sower bears an awesome responsibility. The sower bears an awesome responsibility.

God has determined in his wisdom that through your scattering of the seed, his kingdom will advance and no other way. But at the same time, the sower bears no responsibility. Paul says in one Corinthians nine, verse 16, woe to me if I don't preach the gospel, woe to me if I shirk this most awesome of responsibilities to scatter seed.

But then the prophet Isaiah says, in Isaiah 55 and verse 11, God says, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth. It shall not return to me empty. But it shall accomplish that which I purpose and shall succeed in the thing for which I meant to send it. Do you know that God intends to send seed onto hard ground?

God intends to send seed into thorny ground. That was the, the whole reasoning behind Jesus' explanation and his quotation of the prophet Isaiah. He says they don't see, they've got eyes, but they don't see. They've got ears, but they don't understand. But nevertheless, they will continue to hear because I'm going to continue to tell them.

So God purposes, to send seed into the thorny ground, into the shallow ground, and even into the hard ground. And we don't know what his intention is, but sometimes his intention is that that seed goes into the good ground, not knowing what his intention is, not knowing the purpose, not knowing how the seed springs to life.

We have the awesome responsibility to scatter seed wide and broad and often, but we have no responsibility for. The production of the seed, the success of the seed. Once it's sown, God is a big enough God to take upon himself the full responsibility of the sprouting of the seed unto life as well as the non-sprouting God's a big enough God to take that full responsibility unto himself to say, the seed will accomplish my purpose.

It will not go out. You will not scatter seed. Do you know that you will never scatter seed? That doesn't fulfill God's purpose for that seed because God says the seed, the word will accomplish my purpose for the word. So we are to be scatterers far and wide and often scatterers who know our responsibility is to scatter, but then our responsibility is to sleep and to rest in the Lord of the harvest that we might be blessed.

To be present when the harvest comes.