

THE SEED THAT IS PLANTED IN YOU

Mark 4:1-25

And again He began to teach by the sea. And a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat in it on the sea; and the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea. Then He taught them many things by parables, and said to them in His teaching: "Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. And it happened, as he sowed, that some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it. Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. And some seed fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. But other seed fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred." And He said to them, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable. And He said to them, "To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, so that 'Seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand; Lest they should turn, and their sins be forgiven them.' " And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? The sower sows the word. And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble. Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

Also He said to them, "Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand? For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." Then He said to them, "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."

This is a large portion of Scripture and it seems as though there are three parables involved here. Yes, it could be said that there are indeed three parables, but they all are part of the same message. The seed that is planted in each of us, that is, the gospel of Jesus Christ, is only going to continue to grow based on our decisions and actions within each of these three messages. And just as important is the fact that our decisions based on whether we hear and take heed to what these are saying, will bear eternal fruit, that will last forever. Now is the time of great testing. Now is the time of choosing who we will serve, and now is the time to begin preparing for our eternal place in God's glory. Tomorrow may be too late. Tomorrow you will not have the same opportunities that you have today. Now is our call to salvation, now is our time to shine, now is our time to rise up and grow into what God has prepared us to be in His eternal kingdom.

You may already be thinking, that the parable of the sower and the seed tells us that if the seed is planted in good soil it will grow and bear fruit. Right? What is the point of tacking on other parables? There is a point in this, as there was a reason for Jesus running off these three parables in succession and each parable is vital to the message and to our understanding.

First, let's begin with the parable of the sower and the seed. The sower is the one who preaches the gospel. In this passage of Scripture it is Jesus. Today it is I who shares the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. To each of us though it is an opportunity and a calling to bear fruit for the kingdom of God as Mark quoted Jesus as saying at the end of his gospel, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." (**Mark 16:15-16**) And what is that gospel message that we are to preach? **John 3:16-17** says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." Jesus was sent here by God the Father, to die on a cross for our sins and then to raise from the dead on the third day, conquering death, and giving eternal life to all who will believe on Him. Mark recorded that Jesus began His ministry after the imprisonment of John the Baptist by preaching, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel." (**Mark 1:15**) Repent and believe. If Jesus said it so can I. Repent and believe the gospel. The gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus, who is of the Father, who of which Jesus said, "I and the Father are one" (**John 10:30**) and to which John explained in **1 John 5:7**, "For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word [Jesus], and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one." The preaching, or teaching, or sharing of the gospel of Jesus Christ then, as it is received by others, is the

planting of the seed. **John 1:12** says, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name." You may hear the gospel of Jesus Christ yet not receive the gospel of Jesus Christ. Receiving the gospel is actually receiving Jesus into our hearts. "As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God." And as **Acts 5:32** says, we receive the Holy Spirit (that is the Spirit of Christ Jesus) when we obey Him. That is just the beginning. Jesus said, "the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

When Jesus was confronted by a man whose son had a demon that would throw the boy on the ground, would foam at the mouth, gnash his teeth, and he would become rigid. Jesus said to the father, "if you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." (**Mark 9:23**) No matter where you're at in sin, or circumstances, or bondage, or in demonic strongholds, nothing is impossible with God to those who will believe. As Jesus said of the rich man entering heaven, "With God, all things are possible." Believe and receive Jesus Christ. From there we can look at the different scenarios of what can happen after that seed has been planted. The seed falls to the wayside. No one hearing the gospel message should allow the seed to be snatched up by the devil. Today is that day to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus died on the cross, to pay the penalty of death that is due us for sinning against God. But we must receive that gift from God as the one and only way to be forgiven of our sins and to be right before God so that we may be with Him in His eternal kingdom. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." Only the righteousness of God could cover us from our sins against God. And the righteousness of God has been revealed to us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Jesus satisfied the righteous requirement of the law of God. (**Romans 8:4**) To all who will believe on Him and receive Him.

The next possibility of that seed is to fall on stony ground. "These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble." (**Mark 4:16-17**) It is then imperative for us to know that as God doesn't suddenly whisk us away from this world after we believe on Jesus, we are meant to remain here until He determines to take us to our eternal home. Jesus, in His call to His disciples said, "Come, follow me." Likewise He says it to us. Just as Jesus said to His disciples, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for

My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" (**Mark 8:34-36**) Suppose the seed that was planted, began to grow, and then decided to uproot itself, and go and sit on a sofa in a nearby home and just watch tv. Well, given an amount of time, that plant is going to wither up and die. Right? Regardless as to the state of that plant, whether still alive or not, when the homeowner finds that plant, they will say something like, "what in the world is this thing doing here" and they will take it to the back door, open the door, and toss it out." The same can be said about those who believe on Jesus Christ and receive Him. We, are not of this world and aren't meant to be uprooted and doing our own thing. We will wither up and die. We are not meant to be of this world, just to be in this world. We are meant to be the planted seed that flourishes and brings forth fruit in time. And yes, we live in a wicked, sin-plagued world.

The next scenario in the parable is the seed that is among the thorns to where "the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful." This is where the parable can kind of break down because we do have control as to where we remain in good soil. If we remain among others who have thorny vines, what is likely to happen? But we can choose to not be associated with those with thorny vines and move to the good soil that will allow us to flourish. Nevertheless, if we were to try and find that perfect place to where we are never affected by the thorny vines we would have to leave this world. But with God, all things are possible. We are God's planted seed, that is to be a flourishing plant that bears fruit. He can keep those vines from choking you. After all, once again, we haven't just believed on Jesus but have received Him. He is our Savior and our Lord. He is our Rock and Fortress, our Protector, our Help in time of need. Any time that those thorns are coming up to get us, we can call out to Jesus saying, "help me Jesus!" "Save me from these thorny vines that are trying to choke me out!" "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved!" (**Romans 10:13**) God has great plans for you to be that flourishing plant that brings forth much fruit. He doesn't just plant us to grow for no good reason. When we believe on Jesus, and receive of His Spirit in our hearts when we repent and change our minds to follow Jesus instead of continuing in sin, "who [God] also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee," (**2 Corinthians 1:21**) we then are, "His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:10) That is God's plans for us. Those good works that He plans to do IN US is the bearing of fruit.

That brings us to the last scenario of the seed, being planted in good soil. It is those who are planted in the gospel of Jesus Christ and remain in that good soil, that IS Jesus. The Apostle Paul in

Colossians 1:21-23, "And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight— **if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard**, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister." When we are planted in the good soil of the gospel we find all the nutrients we need through His Word, the Holy Bible, and in prayer, and in fellowship with other believers. And in God's perfect time we WILL bear fruit. The same faith we have in believing Jesus died on the cross for our sins He works in us to believe that we WILL bear fruit. We are all left here after we first believed so that we can bear fruit for His kingdom. Then, Jesus continued past the parable of the sower to say, "Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand? For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." We are left here to not only believe on Jesus as dying on a cross for our sins but to also believe that we are His workmanship to be used for His kingdom and His glory, to be His light that shines in this dark and dying world. Yes, this world will be passing away. **1 John 2:15-17** says, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." While we are in this world we are to CONTINUE following Jesus. Just because Jesus said 6 months ago, or six years ago, or whatever, "come follow Me", He never tells us to stop. If we do we become like the plant that thought it could just sit on the sofa watching tv, or the plant that chose to hang with the thorny vines, or the seed that ended up on the rocks that just couldn't trust Jesus through the trials and tribulations in life.

Jesus got us this far, He called us, revealed to us His perfect plan of salvation through Jesus Christ, and He continues to call us as our Great Shepherd, "come follow me." Lastly, Jesus said, "With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him." If you wonder why it seems like your just spinning your wheels, getting nowhere in your spiritual life, it can be that. We are blessed by God to be a blessing to others. If we aren't being that blessing then we are likely to get root rot. We have to be passing those blessings on to others to keep the good flow of Jesus nutrients working through us. With that being said, may we all be great blessings to others for His kingdom, glory, honor and praise. And stay away from the thorns. Amen.