

The Gospel Seed^{*}

By David Phillips

Introduction

1. Jesus often taught in Parables.
2. Parables fulfilled two purposes.
 - a. They hid spiritual truths from those who did not seek the truth, while revealing spiritual truths to those who did seek the truth (Matt. 13:11-17).
 - b. They illustrated spiritual truths using physical figures that we may better understand and relate to them.
3. In this lesson we will consider three parables in which Jesus used *seed* to illustrate the gospel and the kingdom of God.
4. Seeds grow and bear fruit, thus it is a fitting figure.

Discussion

I. The Nature of Seed

- A. Inherent in the nature of the seed is its tendency to grow.
 - B. Jesus applied this nature to both the kingdom, and the word of God.
 1. In its initial state, the seed is plain and relatively uninteresting.
 2. But when it contacts the soil, it springs forth in all of its beauty and wonder.
 3. It is transformed from an uninteresting speck to fruitful and abundant plant.
 4. As the springs forth new life, so the word of God springs forth new life in the hearts of men (1 Pet. 1:23-25).
 - C. Jesus capitalizes on the nature of the seed to teach spiritual truths in His parables.

II. The Parable of the Sower: Matt. 13:3-23; Mark 4:2-20; Luke 8:4-15.

- A. The Seed: Matt. 13:4-9.
 1. The seed represents the word of God (vs. 19).
 2. The soil represents the hearts of men (vs.19-23).
 3. As seed grows, so the word of God is able to grow and bear its fruit in the lives of men (vs. 23).
 4. The seed is always good, but the affect it has on the individual depends on the condition of the heart.
- B. The seed was scattered.
 1. Servants of God are to be scattering the seed (1 Cor. 3:6).
 2. From individuals and local churches God's word sounds forth (1 Thess. 1:8).
 3. But, like seed, God's word cannot take effect when it is left in its package. The farmer who does not scatter his seed will not reap a harvest.
 4. Some do not scatter for several reasons.
 - a. Fear of rejection.
 - b. Embarrassment.
 - c. Convinced it will not help a person.
 5. The sower did not fret over where the seed landed, so long as it was scattered.

^{*} Many points in this outline were derived from J.S. Smith's, *Parables of Jesus Christ*, pg. 7, www.electronicgospel.com.

6. We are not in control of the growth, but God (1 Cor. 3:6). His task is to simply scatter the seed right and left.

C. The seed must grow.

1. From another perspective, we are the soil that receives the seed.
2. God's word will produce fruit in those who have good hearts.
3. God's word has come into contact with your heart, but what affect is it having in your life?
4. Is your heart hardened, stony, full of thorns, or is it good and ready to produce fruit?

III. **The Parable of the Mustard Seed: Matt. 13:31-32; Mark 4:30-32**

A. The mustard seed represents the kingdom.

1. A mustard seed is small, but becomes one of the greatest plants in the garden.
2. Likewise, the kingdom started small (only 120, Acts 1:15).
3. But, from this small seed it multiplied greatly and now includes all the faithful from every generation.

B. The kingdom of God will keep growing larger than all the other plants (kingdoms) will eventually stop growing and fade away.

C. Are we growing the kingdom?

1. God's kingdom is a growing kingdom.
2. Do we manifest the characteristics of that kingdom?

IV. **The Parable of the Growing Seed: Mark 4:26-29**

A. A seed does not need to be coaxed in order to grow.

1. The farmer simply needs to let it do what it does.
2. Jesus is the farmer, He is in heaven, but His kingdom is still growing on earth.
3. God is causing His kingdom to grow even now.

B. When men interfere with the natural growth of the seed, it will fail.

1. Men can water and cultivate the soil to help the growth of the seed (1 Cor. 3:6).
2. But, when men try to take the seed apart, or alter it in any way it will either not bear fruit or bear a different fruit.
3. Such is the affect when men try to take matters into their own hands and make the kingdom something different than what God revealed.
4. Just as the farmer must trust in God to cause the growth, we too must trust God to cause growth in His kingdom.

Conclusion

1. These parables not only teach us about the nature of the kingdom, but also our relationship to the kingdom.
2. Growth describes the nature of the kingdom. Only when we live are characterized by growth can we truly be kingdom citizens.
3. Let us, therefore, learn from these parables how to better serve the Lord in our lives.

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