

GREATER BETHEL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH, INC.

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BIBLE STUDY TOPIC: KINGDOM GROWTH

Scripture: St. Mark 4:26-29

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Stunted growth in a person is a tragedy. But stunted growth in the Kingdom is also a tragedy. God has created his Kingdom to grow. The Kingdom of God should be an ever-expanding endeavor, one in which we are actively involved. Kingdom growth is something in which every Christian ought to be involved. Jesus has given the Great Commission to all of us. And with the commission goes the power to see it accomplished.

Our Scripture today shares with us a parable about Kingdom growth. In it, we see the secret of that growth. Here again, the seed is the word of God. God's word is the agent of growth in the Kingdom.

Deliberate Planting – verse 26

The first truth is the seed must first be planted. For anything at all to happen in a person's life, there must be the deliberate planting of the seed in the soil.

What we are looking at here is seed sown on good ground. The kind of soil here has been prepared by the Holy Spirit and is ready to receive the seed. But the seed must first be sown by someone. Somehow, the seed must fall upon this earth to begin to have any effect at all.

How do we sow the seed? As Christians, we desire to see people come into the same vital, living relationship with Jesus that we have. That should be the desire of every Christian. But in order for people to come to know Him, the seed must be sown in their hearts. We sow the seed by sharing Jesus.

The message never changes. But we all know that what takes the most thought is how we can create a situation in which we can share the Lord in such a way that the person will be open to what we say.

We must deliberately plant the seed if we would ever see a harvest. There must be a determined effort to share with people the simple story of saving grace. And you must be the one to share it.

Secret Destiny – verse 27

Notice the sower's limited power. There is only so much that the sower can do. If he has done his job in cultivation and preparation of the land, then after he has sown the seed, he must let it alone.

We must cultivate and prepare the lives of those in whose heart we would sow the seed. We must befriend those without the Gospel of Christ.

The Scripture says that he rises and sleeps night and day. In other words, he goes on living his life as usual, day after day. He does not see the seed under the soil. He only hopes everything is going well. He can't dig it up to see how it is doing. He can't tell how much of it is going to come up until he sees the stalk break through the ground. Even then, he can't tell how much of it will produce. He has little knowledge of the weather and other factors which he can't predict. He must trust in the life of the seed. He has done what he can do.

As we share the Gospel message and plant it in the hearts of lost sinners, God will see to it that the word accomplishes the purpose for which He has ordained it.

Progressive Unfolding – verse 28

The progress of the seed is through several stages. In the growth of the seed, it does not go from a grain to the full ear of corn. It does not pass from the planting stage to the harvesting stage overnight. It must pass through several growth stages first. These growth stages are spoken of here as the blade, the head, and the mature grain in the head.

If the heart is "good ground" then the Word may come to harvest. But it must be watered by the continued efforts of those who care. It must withstand the elements that can come against it by Satan. Again, as it passes through the various stages of growth, it may come to that place where it is ready for harvest.

God is at work to bring forth the seed to full harvest. Some of us have the privilege to sow that seed. By sharing the Word, others of us have the privilege to water that seed. We do not have the power to cause the seed to grow. There is a progressive unfolding of that seed by God's grace. Salvation is of God. We are merely His instruments. Paul said, in 1

Corinthians 3:6-7, *"I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth."* God will use the seed we plant and the care in watering we provide to cause that seed to progressively come to maturity. You can count on it. But we must be faithful in planting and water.

Proper Harvesting – verse 29

Only as the seed becomes ripe can it be harvested. Verse 29 gives us the pattern for harvest. When the seed becomes ripe, then it is ready for harvest.

When we do not allow the processes of God to work, we get no real results that last. All we can do is sow the seed, be faithful to water that seed, and allow God to do His work. All of us are different. We all must go through different stages of preparation before harvest. So many times, we who sow the seed are eager to harvest that crop before it is ripe. We must be patient and allow God to deal with that individual. When the time comes, we will find the field ripe.

As we continually and conscientiously sow seed, there will always be some who are fully mature, fully ripe, fully ready to be harvested. We cannot use the maturing process of the seed as an excuse for not winning people to Jesus. If we do, our real problem is that we have no heart for souls.