

Mark 4:26-34 (cf. Matt 13:31-35; Lk 13:18-19)

²⁶ Jesus also said, "The Kingdom of God is like a farmer who scatters seed on the ground. ²⁷ Night and day, while he's asleep or awake, the seed sprouts and grows, but he does not understand how it happens. ²⁸ The earth produces the crops on its own. First a leaf blade pushes through, then the heads of wheat are formed, and finally the grain ripens. ²⁹ And as soon as the grain is ready, the farmer comes and harvests it with a sickle, for the harvest time has come." ³⁰ Jesus said, "How can I describe the Kingdom of God? What story should I use to illustrate it? ³¹ It is like a mustard seed planted in the ground. It is the smallest of all seeds, ³² but it becomes the largest of all garden plants; it grows long branches, and birds can make nests in its shade." ³³ Jesus used many similar stories and illustrations to teach the people as much as they could understand. ³⁴ In fact, in his public ministry he never taught without using parables; but afterward, when he was alone with his disciples, he explained everything to them. (NLT)

²⁶ Jesús continuó: «El reino de Dios se parece a quien esparce semilla en la tierra. ²⁷ Sin que éste sepa cómo, y ya sea que duerma o esté despierto, día y noche brota y crece la semilla. ²⁸ La tierra da fruto por sí sola; primero el tallo, luego la espiga, y después el grano lleno en la espiga. ²⁹ Tan pronto como el grano está maduro, se le mete la hoz, pues ha llegado el tiempo de la cosecha.» ³⁰ También dijo: «¿Con qué vamos a comparar el reino de Dios? ¿Qué parábola podemos usar para describirlo? ³¹ Es como un grano de mostaza: cuando se siembra en la tierra, es la semilla más pequeña que hay, ³² pero una vez sembrada crece hasta convertirse en la más grande de las hortalizas, y echa ramas tan grandes que las aves pueden anidar bajo su sombra.» ³³ Y con muchas parábolas semejantes les enseñaba Jesús la palabra hasta donde podían entender. ³⁴ No les decía nada sin emplear parábolas. Pero cuando estaba a solas con sus discípulos, les explicaba todo. (NVI)

Notes:

A. Parable of the Growing Seed (4:26-29):

- a. The Kingdom of God is like...a process of growth.
 - i. Jesus' hearers were expecting the Kingdom of God, and were very excited when Jesus said it has begun because of Him.
 1. But the Kingdom involves a process of growth. They (and we) live during this process.
- b. During this time:
 - i. The Kingdom is growing, and will grow into a full successful harvest—God is in control. The Kingdom cannot be stopped, because this happens independent from the farmer's efforts or failures.
 1. Even if it looks like the Kingdom is not going to succeed, it will eventually result in a harvest. This will take some time however.
 - ii. The farmer is devoted to the harvest, and keeps working hard as a farmer (business as usual), day after day.
 1. This may seem boring, dull, hard, and dirty, but it is important.
 2. Like the farmer, our lives within this stage of the Kingdom, requires us to be disciples and make disciples day after day. We must work hard at being faithful 'farmers' even if it may seem boring, dull, hard, and dirty (or normal).
 3. The farmer doesn't understand all the details of how the seed grows and turns into a fully mature and productive plant, but the farmer observes and recognizes the different stages of growth: "first a leaf blade pushes through, then the heads of wheat are formed, and finally the grain ripens. And as soon as the grain is ready, the farmer comes and harvests it...for the harvest time has come." (4:28-29).
 4. Like the farmer, we can't understand all the details of the Kingdom of God and the growth process, but we need to be observant towards what we can understand and recognize the process of growth as it approaches the harvest time.
- c. After the process of growth is complete, the Kingdom will be present in full—after the harvest.
- d. Conclusion: The Kingdom of God is like...a process of growth. We can have faith that the harvest will be successful—the Kingdom will succeed—because God is in charge. We need to serve the King in our daily lives, even if this service may seem boring, dull, hard, and dirty.

B. Parable of the Growing Seed (4:30-32):

- a. The Kingdom of God is like...small beginnings and huge results.
 - i. Jesus may seem like a small insignificant beginning for the kingdom of God.
 1. Jesus was the son of a normal family, from a normal town. He was not the son of a politician, military leader, or influential or wealthy family.
 - ii. The Kingdom, like the mustard plant, which begins as a tiny seed, it grows very large and spreads out over large areas.

C. **Summary:** The (full coming of the) Kingdom of God is like...a process of growth that will take time, but will eventually result in a faithful harvest. It begins with what seems small and insignificant, but don't let that fool us, it will result in huge results.

D. Reminder: Have ears to Hear! (4:33-34)

- a. It is important to be in relationship with Jesus so we are present as "he explains everything"! The Kingdom of God is like...being in relationship with Jesus—an intimate relationship with God.