

**Mark 4: 26-29; “The Earth Yielding Crops”, Session # 2 on the Parable of
the Growing Seed, Presented by Pastor Paul Rendall
on November 13th, 2022.**

Mark 4: 26-29 – “And Jesus said, ‘The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how.’ ‘For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head.’ ‘But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.’”

In our first session regarding the meaning of this Parable, I said to you that I believe that the “man” of this Parable is representative of both our Lord Jesus Christ and all the ministers, preachers, and teachers of the word of God whom Christ has sent into His harvest fields to both sow the word of God and to reap those people who will believe in the gospel. The reason that it is hard to discern whether Christ is this “man” is because of the statement in verse 27, that He “should sleep by night and rise by day”, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how.”

1. More proof that Jesus is the “Man” of this Parable in the Primary Sense.

All of the labors of everyone in Christ’s Church are established by what He did during the time of His earthly ministry. Some commentators and interpreters automatically reject Jesus being “the man” of this parable because they say that there is nothing that He does not know, in terms of how the seed should sprout and grow. He is after all, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, and He is God as well as Man. I agree with them when we are speaking in the sense of His Deity, that there certainly is nothing that the Lord Jesus did not know regarding how the seed of the word sprouts and grows.

But in regard to this Parable His not knowing is related to His being the Man Christ Jesus. In His earthly ministry He was on the greatest of all Missions; the salvation of souls. It is in that context that He Himself makes this statement in verses 26 and 27 – The kingdom of God is **as if** a man should scatter seed on the ground. It is **as if** when the seed sprouts and grows, he himself does not know. I am saying that it was as a Man that Jesus sowed the seed of the Word of God when He walked the earth. It was as a Man that He reaped in seeing people come to know Him.

As a Man who was walking upon the earth, really interacting with people around Him, He was out to win them to Himself. In this ministry of His, there were certain things as a Man, that He did not know; things that He had to grow in, in His experience and learn some things in relation to doing them. There were things that He had to do in His ministry, as a Man among men, learning to do the will of God, in which He would not know some things either immediately or altogether. It is in this sense that He is the “man” in this Parable.

For those who may balk at this, I want you to consider with me now, 3 Scriptures which clearly relate that there were certain things that the Lord Jesus did not know when He walked upon the earth.

One is found in Hebrews chapter 5, verse 8 and 9 – “Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.” “And having been perfected, He became the Author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.” Clearly, from these verses, if Jesus had to learn certain things about obedience, we are not thinking about His Deity, but His humanity. His humanity needed to learn and to be perfected. The Deity is always perfect, all-sufficient, all knowing, and unchangeable.

Think also of Mark chapter 13, verses 31 and 32 – “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away till all these things take place.” “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.” “But of that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven,

nor the Son, but only the Father.” Here we find that Christ in His perfect Humanity states categorically that He does not know the hour nor the day. His Father knows it, but He in His humanity does not know it.

John Gill says – “Christ, as the son of man; though he did know it as the Son of God, who knows all things, and so this; but as the son of man, and from his human nature he had no knowledge of any thing future: what knowledge he had of future things in his humanity, he had from his deity; nor, as man, had he any commission to make known, nor did he make known the day of God's vengeance on the Jews.”

The 3rd text which speaks of the limitations of Christ’s humanity, what He knew and did not know is found in Luke 2: 52. “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.” You see here that He did have wisdom, but it says that He increased in wisdom. Clearly, there is no increase of wisdom and knowledge in the Deity of Christ. But in His humanity, there clearly was, and yet there was no sin in him. He was increasing in His experience of what it meant to be a man in every good and righteous way.

So, while our Lord Jesus was here upon the earth, fulfilling His ministry, He was the “man” represented in our Parable who should scatter seed on the ground on men’s hearts. He would sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he himself, as a man, would not know how. He would not know how His kingdom could grow to become as great as it one day would become. But He had faith in all of His Father God’s promises that through His labors in sowing seed and reaping that it one day produce a great harvest. He would sow His own life as a seed, to see this come about.

John 12: 20-24 – “Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus. But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.

By this sowing of Himself He would obtain a great harvest of souls, even all of God’s elect people. And even the nations as His inheritance.

Psalm 2, verses 7-9 – “I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You.’ “Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession.” “You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”

2. The Earth which Yields Crops by Itself .

a. Christ’s Kingdom as “the earth” which yields crops by itself.

So, in thinking about Christ as the “man” who scattered seed, we can also say that this increase in wisdom, His learning obedience by the things that He suffered, and His having all the limitations of knowledge which this implied, all of this ended in regard to His humanity when the Man Christ Jesus fully accomplished redemption for us. His falling into the earth and dying, and His then afterwards being raised from the dead, and ascending to the right hand of the Father completed His earthly ministry. This, His being glorified as a Man led to the formation of the New Testament Church which is the “earth” of our Parable.

1st Corinthians 3: 9 – “For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, you are God’s building.”

This transition took place after His death and resurrection, when the Man Christ Jesus ascended to heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father. Until that time, the Spirit was not yet given to the Church as a whole, for Jesus was not yet glorified. (John 7: 39)

John 7: 37-39– “On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.’ “He who believes in Me, as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” “But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive, for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”

When the Holy Spirit was given on the Day of Pentecost, then the apostles and all those called to “scatter seed” from that time forward to the end of the world would be “the man” represented in the Parable that we are studying. They would be the ones who would be entering in to Christ’s labors of sowing and reaping in the building of the Kingdom of God. All of God’s dear people are “the earth” which brings forth crops by itself. The Church would be that “earth would yield crops by itself” as a kingdom: first the blade, then the head (or the ear), and after that the full grain in the head or ear.

b. Each Individual Christian who yields crops by themselves.

Let’s go back now to John chapter 4 and see an example of this.

We saw in those verses that the Lord Jesus was both sowing the seed and reaping a soul in His conversation with the woman at the well. He first of all asked her for a drink in **verse 7**. And she asked him why, seeing as the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus and the apostles came to this well; Jesus being wearied from his journey. And He said to her in verse 10 – “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.”

Jesus drew her interest to spiritual truths and realities of the great salvation that is found in Himself by saying to her in **verses 13 and 14** – “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst.” “But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” She didn’t really understand that He was talking to her about the gift of salvation through Him yet. **She said in verse 15** – Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.

Since she was thinking it was physical water that Jesus was talking about, He then said to her in **verse 16** – Go call your husband and come here.” And she answered – I have no husband. And Jesus said to her – You have well said that you have no husband, for the you have had five husbands and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly. In showing her sinfulness, she said to him, knowing that He did not know her and could not have come by that information except He received it from God, she said – “Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.”

She then deflected the conversation away from herself by stating in **verse 20** – Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.” He says to her – “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.” “You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is from the Jews.” “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.” “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth.” “The woman said to Him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming (who is called Christ).’ “When He comes, He will tell us all things.” “Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you am He.’”

So here Christ is sowing the seed of the word, and He is reaping a soul to Himself. She is believing in Him. She leaves her waterpot, she goes her way in the city, it says in **verse 28**, and she says to the men, “Come

and see a Man who told me all things that I ever did.” “Could this be the Christ?” Now, you will notice that Christ did not hover over her, or follow her to the city in order to convince her further, or the men who she would talk to. She becomes a witness to Him immediately upon her believing in Him, and “the earth bears crops of itself”.

Jesus in the meantime is teaching His disciples the principles of how they also should be, and will be in the future, sowing and reaping in relation to their preaching the gospel to people. In **verse 35**, He says by way of application to His own disciples – “Do you not say, there are still four months and then comes the harvest?” “Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!” “And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.” “For in this the saying is true – ‘One sow and another reaps.’” “I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.” The disciples were about to enter in to Christ’s labors in their own personal ministries after He had accomplished the work of redemption. He was giving them, that day, an example of this in their being witnesses to what He sowed and reaped that day in relation to this woman at the well.

This woman at the well would be a prime illustration of those principles of sowing and reaping. Because herself believed, and she went and told others in her city about Christ. And then the men of the city came out to see for themselves. **Verse 39** – And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, He told me all that I ever did. So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And because Jesus stayed, many more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman – Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.”

This is the earth yielding crops by itself. In the next session we will look at the development of these crops in the individual believer’s life: first the blade, then the head, and after that the full grain in the head. And how at the end of each believer’s life, Christ will put in the sickle, because the harvest has come.