

## *“The Seed Sprouts and Grows”*

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Read Mark 4:26-29

*...<sup>27</sup> and he goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts and grows –  
how, he himself does not know. <sup>28</sup> "The soil produces crops by itself; first the blade,  
then the head, then the mature grain in the head.*

*<sup>29</sup> "But when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."*

As is true of all parables there is a large, singular idea that needs to be caught by the listener. The intent of the parables as found in Mark 4 is to encourage His disciples as to the certainty of the work in which they are engaged and to instruct them as to the character of this kingdom. There are three aspects to this kingdom as it is described in the parable. First, the growth of the Kingdom is always constant. Second, the growth of the Kingdom is unavoidable. And finally, the growth of the Kingdom is complete.

Let us begin by noting how “The growth of the Kingdom is always constant.” Often our inability to see the object or idea with our own two eyes leaves us with uncertainty and doubt. Yet faith seizes the invisible in order to believe the unimaginable. It is while the individual lives their life that the seed sprouts and grows. Even when we cannot see, God is at work establishing and advancing His Kingdom. There is nothing created that can stop Him from what He has begun. Arthur C. Ainger wrote the following poem in 1894. I would like to consider the first two stanzas since they capture so well the idea presented in the parable.

### God is working His purpose out

God is working his purpose out  
as year succeeds to year:  
God is working his purpose out,  
and the time is drawing near;  
nearer and nearer draws the time,  
the time that shall surely be,  
when the earth shall be filled with the glory of God  
as the waters cover the sea.

From utmost east to utmost west,  
where'er the church has gone,  
by the mouth of many messengers  
the call of God has come:  
Give ear to me, you continents;  
you isles, give ear to me,  
that the earth may be filled with the glory of God  
as the waters cover the sea.

*Continued on the other side...*

The second noted area is, "The growth of the Kingdom is unavoidable." Although God works in and through the will of man to accomplish His purpose, such a choice on God's part does not cause Him to be in bondage to man's will. There is nothing man can do to stop or undo what God has and is doing. New Testament scholar William Barclay makes the following observation:

"There is nothing so powerful as growth. A tree can split a concrete pavement with the power of its growth. A weed can push its green head through an asphalt path. Nothing can stop growth. It is so with the kingdom. In spite of man's rebellion and disobedience, God's work goes on; and nothing in the end can stop the purposes of God." (William Barclay, *Mark*, 108).

Finally, "The growth of the Kingdom is complete."

We are not to lose heart when we sow seed and do not see immediate and open change. If the seed is sown and if it lands in good soil, then a harvest is inevitable. "Some growths are quicker than others, but in all there is growth. And we have no right to look for the end at the beginning, the ripened Christian experience in the young convert, the full corn in the first appearance of the blade." (*People's New Testament Commentary* on Mark 4:28)

What a powerful commentary on the nature of the work in which we are privy to and a part of! Right now God is causing His kingdom to increase. Right now God is marching through the ranks of those who would rise up against Him. Right now God will finish the work that He alone began. We must patiently await the inevitable, the unavoidable, and the unimaginable. May the truth of His kingdom marching on be a source of deep-seated encouragement and hope.