

By Itself the Kingdom Grows

Scripture Reading — Mark 4:26-29

“All by itself the soil produces grain ...”
—Mark 4:28—

Mark 4 contains three seed parables. The parable of the sower (vv. 2-20) promises that the seed will take hold in the life of believers. The parable of the mustard seed (vv. 30-32) describes how small beginnings can produce amazing results. And today’s reading, the parable of the seed growing secretly, pictures the growth of kingdom seed after its planting and before the harvest.

This parable also emphasizes that the farmer merely scatters seed but doesn’t know how it grows as the seed and soil do their work. The lesson, of course, is that God cultivates what is planted. The Almighty is in charge, not us.

This parable comes to mind when I recall a family that occasionally worshiped with our church community. I visited them often in my work as an evangelist. But then they stopped coming to church, and eventually I quit visiting them. Three years later they began attending again and made a solid commitment to Jesus Christ. God was working in their lives, though we didn’t know how.

Spiritual results do not happen immediately. “First the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head.” God is faithfully working behind the scenes, producing growth. So we can relax and not feel responsible for converting people or producing spiritual growth in their lives. That is God’s work. Our work is to scatter seed and continue being faithful to Jesus.

Prayer

Lord, we know that only your Spirit can transform people’s lives. Help us do our part as you produce your harvest. Amen.

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