

Mark 4:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The sower soweth the word.

Analysis

Jesus provides interpretation: 'The sower soweth the word.' This identifies the seed as God's word—the gospel message, divine revelation, kingdom teaching. The sower represents Jesus primarily, but extends to all who proclaim God's word. The simplicity is profound: Christian ministry is sowing seed—proclaiming Scripture faithfully, leaving results to God. The minister's task isn't producing growth (that's God's work, 1 Corinthians 3:6-7) but faithful sowing. This liberates from results-oriented ministry pressure while demanding faithful, patient proclamation. The emphasis on 'the word' elevates Scripture's centrality in conversion and sanctification.

Historical Context

Jesus' identification of seed with 'the word' echoes Old Testament: God's word is living, active, accomplishing purposes (Isaiah 55:10-11); it's seed that produces fruit (Hosea 10:12). New Testament consistently emphasizes word's generative power: believers are born again through the living and abiding word (1 Peter 1:23); faith comes by hearing God's word (Romans 10:17). Early church prioritized Scripture reading and exposition, understanding ministry as word-centered. Reformers recovered this emphasis: sola scriptura, centrality of preaching, Bible translation.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does understanding ministry as seed-sowing rather than result-producing free you from unhealthy pressure?
2. What does this parable teach about Scripture's centrality in evangelism and discipleship?
3. How faithful are you in 'sowing seed' through consistent Scripture proclamation and sharing?

Interlinear Text

ὁ σπείρει τὸν λόγον σπείρει
G3588 The sower G3588 the word The sower
G4687 G3056 G4687

Additional Cross-References

Acts 8:4 (Word): Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

Matthew 13:19 (Word): When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

Matthew 13:37 (Parallel theme): He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;

Luke 8:11 (Word): Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

Mark 2:2 (Word): And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them.

Mark 4:3 (Parallel theme): Harken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow:

Isaiah 32:20 (Parallel theme): Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass.

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