

Mark 4:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground;

Analysis

Jesus introduces another kingdom parable: 'So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground.' This parable (unique to Mark) emphasizes seed's inherent power and mysterious growth independent of human effort. The farmer sows seed—representing gospel proclamation—then resumes normal life. The focus shifts from sower to seed's mysterious germination and growth. This teaches that conversion and sanctification result from God's power in His word, not human technique or effort. Ministers plant and water, but God gives growth (1 Corinthians 3:6-7). The parable encourages patient trust in seed's power rather than anxious manipulation.

Historical Context

Ancient farmers understood seed's mysterious life-force. They sowed but couldn't control or fully understand germination and growth—biological processes remained mysterious until modern science. This agricultural reality illustrated spiritual truth: gospel possesses inherent power (Romans 1:16; Hebrews 4:12). Sowers can't manufacture or manipulate conversion—that's Spirit's sovereign work. Early church trusted God's word to accomplish purposes (Isaiah 55:10-11). Reformers opposed works-righteousness and human merit, emphasizing God's sovereign grace in salvation. This parable guards against both ministerial pride (taking credit for results) and ministerial despair (feeling responsible for lack of results).

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does understanding seed's inherent power free you from unhealthy pressure to manufacture spiritual results?
2. What role do you play in spiritual growth—active but limited, trusting God for increase?
3. How does this parable encourage patient, faithful sowing rather than anxious manipulation?

Interlinear Text

Καὶ	ἔλεγεν	Οὕτως	ἐστὶν	ἡ	βασιλεία	τοῦ	θεοῦ	ὡς
And	he said	So	is	G3588	the kingdom	G3588	of God	as
G2532	G3004	G3779	G2076		G932		G2316	G5613
ἐάν	ἄνθρωπος	βάλῃ	τὸν	σπόρον	ἐπὶ	τῆς	γῆς	
if	a man	should cast	G3588	seed	into	G3588	the ground	
G1437	G444	G906		G4703	G1909		G1093	

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 13:24 (Kingdom): Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

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

Luke 8:5 (Parallel theme): A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.

James 3:18 (Parallel theme): And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

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.

Proverbs 11:18 (Parallel theme): The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.

Ecclesiastes 11:4 (Parallel theme): He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.

Ecclesiastes 11:6 (Parallel theme): In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.

John 12:24 (Parallel theme): Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.