

Parables are simply stories that are told to show religious, moral or philosophical principles. They provide simple comparisons of things that naturally occur. The use of parables by Jesus are the keys to life, righteousness, holiness, balance and ultimately the keys to the Kingdom. The people, places, things, and situations reveal a temporal truth... but more than that they represent an eternal spiritual reality.

PARABLE	MATTHE	MARK	LUKE	John
Lamp Under a Basket	5:14-16	4:21,22	8:16,17	
.	.	.	11:33-36	
Bread of life				6:31-38
A Wise Man Builds on Rock	7:24-27	.	6:47-49	
and a Fool on Sand	.	.	.	
New Cloth on and Old	9:16	2:21	5:36	
New Wine in Old Wineskins	9:17	2:22	5:37,38	
The Sower	13:3-23	4:2-20	8:4-15	
The Tares (Weeds)	13:24-30	.	.	
The Mustard Seed	13:31,32	4:30-32	13:18,19	
The Leaven	13:33	.	13:20,21	
The Hidden Treasure	13:44	.	.	
The Pearl of Great Price	13:45,46	.	.	
The Dragnet	13:47-50	.	.	
The Good shepherd				10:1-18
The Householder	13:52	.	.	
The Lost Sheep	18:12-14	.	15:3-7	
The Unforgiving Servant	18:23-35	.	.	
The Workers in the Vineyard	20:1-16	.	.	
The Two Sons	21:28-32	.	.	
The Wicked Tenants	21:33-45	12:1-12	20:9-19	
The Wedding Feast	22:2-14	.	14:16-24	

The Fig Tree	24:32-44	13:28-32	21:29-33	
The Ten Virgins	25:1-13	.	.	
The Talents / The Minas (Pounds)	25:14-30	.	19:11-27	
The Growing Seed	.	4:26-29	.	
The Watchful Porter	.	13:33-37	.	
The Creditor and Two	.		7:41-43	
The Good Samaritan	.		10:30-37	
A Friend in Need	.		11:5-13	
The Rich Fool	.		12:16-21	
The Faithful and Wise	.		12:35-40	
Faithful and Wicked Steward	24:45-51		12:42-48	
The Barren Fig Tree			13:6-9	
The Lowest Seat			14:7-11	
Building a Tower and Making War			14:25-35	
The Lost Coin			15:8-10	
The Lost Son			15:11-32	
The Shrewd Manager			16:1-13	
The Rich Man and Lazarus			16:19-31	
Unprofitable Servants			17:7-10	
The Persistent Widow			18:1-8	
The Pharisee and the Tax Collector			18:9-14	
Vine and branches				15:1-17

Mark 4: 26-29 “And He was saying, “The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil; and he goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts and grows—how, he himself does not know. “The soil produces crops by itself; first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head. “But when the crop permits, he immediately aputs in the sickle, because the harvest has come.” (NASB, 1995)

Jesus often used familiar scenes from ordinary life to explain spiritual truths. His listeners knew what it meant to plant a field, wait through changing weather, watch for the first green shoots, and finally gather a harvest. In this parable, however, Jesus is not primarily teaching agriculture. He is teaching about the kingdom of God—how it begins, grows, matures, and ultimately produces a harvest.

The Seed and the Kingdom

The parable begins with a man scattering seed on the ground. Although Jesus does not specifically identify the seed in this particular parable, He does so earlier in Mark 4, in the Parable of the Sower. There Jesus says, “The farmer sows the word” (Mark 4:14). Luke makes the meaning equally clear: “The seed is the word of God” (Luke 8:11).

Therefore, the seed in the Parable of the Growing Seed represents the Word of God. The kingdom grows wherever God’s Word is received, believed, obeyed, and shared. God’s Word is not lifeless information. It is living truth, carrying within it the power to awaken faith, shape character, correct sin, strengthen hope, and lead people into a saving relationship with God.

The farmer has an important task: he must scatter the seed. Yet, after he has planted it, he cannot command it to grow. He cannot force the seed to break open beneath the soil. He cannot make the roots stretch downward or make the stalk rise upward. The farmer can prepare the ground, plant faithfully, and care for the field, but the mystery of life and growth belongs to God.

This is what Jesus wants us to understand about the kingdom. We have responsibilities, but God is the One who gives life and growth. We can teach the Word, preach the gospel, invite others to study Scripture, encourage a struggling believer, pray for someone who is far from God, and seek to obey God in our own lives. But we cannot change a heart by human strength alone. Only God can bring spiritual life from the seed of His Word.

Growth Is Often a Mystery

Jesus says that the farmer sleeps and rises “night and day,” while the seed sprouts and grows, “though he does not know how” (Mark 4:27). This does not mean that the farmer does nothing. Rather, it means that the farmer recognizes the limits of his control. He plants, but God gives the increase.

Spiritual growth often works in this same quiet and mysterious way. A person may hear a sermon, read a passage of Scripture, attend a Bible study, or receive encouragement from another believer. At first, there may seem to be little outward change. Yet the Word may be taking root beneath the surface. God may be convicting the heart, changing a person’s desires, healing old wounds, opening understanding, or preparing that person to respond in faith.

Often, we cannot see what God is doing immediately. We may pray for a family

member, friend, coworker, or neighbor and wonder whether our efforts matter. We may share Scripture and receive no visible response. We may speak words of truth and love, only to feel that they have been ignored. Yet this parable reminds us that God works in ways that we cannot always observe or explain.

The apostle Paul expressed this truth when he wrote, “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow” (1 Corinthians 3:6). Paul and Apollos both served faithfully, but neither could take credit for spiritual growth. God alone brings the increase. This should humble us, because we are dependent on God; but it should also encourage us, because the results do not rest entirely on our ability, personality, or methods.

Growth Is Gradual

Jesus also emphasizes that the growth of the seed takes place in stages: “First the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head” (Mark 4:28). The harvest does not appear the day after the seed is planted. Growth is real, but it is gradual.

This is an important truth for every believer. Many people become discouraged because they expect instant spiritual maturity. They may believe in Christ and then expect every weakness, temptation, fear, habit, or unanswered question to disappear immediately. While God certainly can bring sudden change, much of Christian growth is a process. God patiently develops us over time.

A believer may first show only the smallest signs of new life: a desire to pray, a growing concern about sin, a hunger for Scripture, a willingness to forgive, or a new desire to obey God. These may seem small, but they can be evidence that the seed of God’s Word is at work. Over time, as the believer continues to receive the Word, pray, worship, serve, and walk in obedience, that early growth can develop into greater spiritual strength and maturity.

Peter encouraged believers to “crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation” (1 Peter 2:2). Just as a baby needs nourishment in order to grow, Christians need continual nourishment from the Word of God. We do not outgrow our need for Scripture. The same Word that brings us to faith also strengthens us, corrects us, and helps us mature.

This gradual process calls for patience. We must be patient with ourselves, patient with other believers, and patient with those for whom we are praying. A young plant should not be condemned because it is not yet a full-grown crop. Instead, it should be cared for, nourished, and given time to develop. In the same way, God calls His people to encourage growth rather than demand instant perfection.

Receiving the Word Personally

The Parable of the Growing Seed first applies to our own hearts. If the Word of God is the seed, then each of us must ask whether we are receiving that seed properly. In the Parable of the Sower, Jesus teaches that the seed bears fruit only in good soil. Luke describes that soil as those who hear the Word “with a good and noble heart,” hold on to

it, and “by persevering produce a crop” (Luke 8:15).

Receiving God’s Word requires humility. James writes, “Humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you” (James 1:21). A humble heart does not approach Scripture merely to find support for its own opinions. Instead, it comes ready to hear, learn, repent, and obey. The Bereans provide a strong example because they received the message with eagerness and examined the Scriptures carefully to see whether what they were hearing was true (Acts 17:11).

At the same time, believers must remove the attitudes and habits that can choke the Word’s work in their lives. James tells Christians to put away moral filth and evil. Peter urges believers to lay aside malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander before craving the pure milk of God’s Word (1 Peter 2:1–2). Sin, bitterness, pride, distraction, and worldly priorities can hinder spiritual growth just as weeds can hinder the growth of a crop.

Receiving the Word is not a one-time event. It is a continuing pattern of life. We need to read it, hear it, study it, meditate on it, discuss it, and obey it. As we do, we may not always recognize every change as it occurs. Still, God is at work. First comes the blade, then the head, then the full grain. The evidence of growth may be gradual, but it can become increasingly visible in a believer’s attitudes, decisions, relationships, speech, and service.

Sowing the Word Widely

This parable also applies to the church’s mission in the world. Christians are called not only to receive the seed personally but also to scatter it widely. The sower in the Parable of the Sower did not limit his seed to a single small spot. He scattered it broadly. Likewise, believers should share the Word of God through teaching, conversation, acts of love, prayer, personal testimony, Bible study, and faithful Christian living.

Sometimes sowing feels ordinary and unnoticed. A parent teaches a child to pray. A friend shares a verse with someone who is grieving. A Sunday school teacher prepares a lesson week after week. A church member invites a neighbor to worship. A believer quietly lives with honesty, mercy, and courage before others. These actions may seem small, but they are forms of sowing.

We should not measure the value of sowing only by immediate results. There will be seasons when we see visible fruit, but there will also be seasons when we simply continue planting and waiting. James compares patient believers to a farmer who waits for the land to yield its valuable crop (James 5:7). The farmer must do his work faithfully, but he must also trust God with the process.

This does not mean that Christians should become passive. We are still called to plant, water, pray, teach, serve, and persevere. However, we must remember that our work is not to manufacture spiritual results. We cannot save people through pressure, cleverness, entertainment, or human gimmicks. The gospel itself is “the power of God

that brings salvation to everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16). God’s Word has power because it reveals Christ, confronts sin, offers grace, and calls people to faith.

The Coming Harvest

Finally, Jesus says that when the grain is ripe, the farmer puts in the sickle because the harvest has come (Mark 4:29). The harvest shows that the farmer’s patient labor was not meaningless. The seed that was once hidden beneath the soil has now become mature grain.

In the kingdom of God, there is both a present and future harvest. In the present, we see a harvest whenever people come to faith, grow in discipleship, turn from sin, serve others, and bear spiritual fruit. In the future, the harvest also points toward God’s final completion of His work. God will finish what He has begun. Paul gives believers this assurance: “He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:6).

That promise gives hope to every believer who feels unfinished. God does not abandon His work halfway through. The Christian life involves growth, pruning, learning, repentance, and perseverance, but God remains faithful. The seed He plants through His Word is not weak or empty. It carries the life-giving power of the One who speaks it.

Conclusion

The Parable of the Growing Seed teaches us that, in the kingdom of God, we are laborers together with God. We are called to sow the seed of His Word in our own hearts and in the lives of others. We are called to prepare good soil through humility, repentance, obedience, and a continual hunger for Scripture. We are called to be faithful in planting and watering.

Yet we must also remember that God gives the growth. We may not understand every way He works. We may not always see immediate results. We may experience long seasons of waiting. But the Word of God is living and powerful. It can bring new birth, nourish spiritual maturity, and save souls.

Therefore, we should not lose heart when growth seems slow. The blade must come before the head, and the head before the full grain. God’s timing is wise, and His work is sure. Our responsibility is to keep receiving His Word, keep sowing it faithfully, and keep trusting Him for the harvest.

The question for each of us is this: Are we allowing the seed of God’s Word to grow in our own hearts? And are we faithfully scattering that seed into the lives of others?