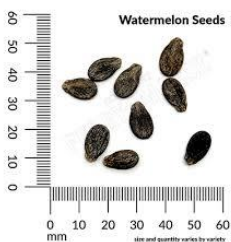


26 He said, “The kingdom of God is like this: A man scatters seed on the ground, 27 and while he sleeps and rises, night and day, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. 28 The ground produces fruit on its own: first the blade, then the head, then the full grain in the head. 29 When the crop is ready, he swings the sickle without delay, because the harvest has come.”

30 Then he said, “To what should we compare the kingdom of God? Or with what parable may we picture it? 31 It is like a mustard seed, which when sown on the ground is one of the smallest of all the seeds planted in the ground. 32 Yet when it is planted, it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches so that the birds of the sky can nest under its shade.”

33 With many similar parables he continued to speak the word to them, as much as they were able to hear. 34 He did not speak to them without a parable. But when he was alone with his disciples, he explained everything to them.

Dear Fellow Disciples of Jesus,



Watermelon seeds don't weigh much. You can have anywhere from approximately 200-300 seeds in an ounce. A seed can produce watermelons weighing 6 pounds to 50 pounds each according to a couple of different websites. This was not a thorough



investigation. It makes sense.

This example proves what Jesus is teaching today. A small seed can produce something big. How does this happen? What is the spiritual point that Jesus is making? I will talk about what Jesus is teaching us in Mark 4. We are reminded that the gospel seed is powerful. So I say: **This Little Seed Promises Great Growth.** This will hopefully encourage us to use God's word regularly.

1. The Gospel seed sprouts and grows.

We know that seeds sprout and grow. (Pics) We see them in fields. Many of us grew them in cups in classrooms.

The people of Jesus' day were more familiar since most families grew crops or at least could see others doing so next to the towns and villages where they lived.

We may wonder how the Kingdom of God grows. Jesus' early disciples did because Jesus uses the picture from farm life to help them understand the Kingdom grows through the Gospel seed.



A. An Israeli farmer plants the seed and expects it to grow.

1. The seed is scattered by the farmer. The word of God is scattered by people sharing it.

2. The farmer doesn't know how it is able to grow. He knows WHO makes it grow. God makes it grow. The power of God is the answer.

This is true with the Gospel seed. St. Paul writes in (pic)1 Cor. 3:6-7 **“I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then, neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but it is God who causes the growth.** The word of God is scattered. It takes root in people's hearts.

B. He expects it to be fruitful.

1. Out of the ground comes the blade that produces a full head of grain.

People will have the Gospel of Jesus grow in their heart. They tell others who in turn tell others. So the number of believers grows. The Gospel is fruitful. The Lord God promised this long before Jesus' time. He says through Isaiah (55:11), **“...my word that goes out from my mouth will not return to me empty. Rather, it will accomplish whatever I please, and it will succeed in the purpose for which I sent it.”**

2. There is plenty of crop to harvest. Jesus brings people into his church and finally into heaven. It was reported by WELS World Missions at the District Convention this week that there will soon be over 300,000 Lutherans who are in fellowship with us, brothers and sisters in Christ. That is almost the size of the WELS today which started work in Africa in the mid-1950's. It was suggested that eventually that group will pass by us in total number of people.

C. This is important because:

1. We see a lot of preaching and sharing and it doesn't seem like much is happening. We can't see in people's hearts. We have God's promises that in some hearts it takes root and grows.

Therefore we are encouraged to spread the word. Do you want to make a difference? Do you want to help a frustrated and dying world? Spread the word.

2. It is human to hesitate and human to doubt the power of the word. It is also a sin to not trust the Lord. We need to ask God to forgive us for our hesitancy and for doubting that the word works. He graciously forgives us in Jesus. He graciously gives us opportunities to be a part of the Gospel mission.

2. The Gospel seed grows large.

Two questions are offered by Jesus in vs 30.

“To what should we compare the kingdom of God? Or with what parable may we picture it?” (Pic) He answers his own questions. It is like a mustard seed. See the tiny mustard seed. (Pic) See the large mustard plant. The plant can grow 8 to 10 feet in height. Birds can perch in it. What is

remarkable? The tiny seed grows large! So it is with the Gospel seed.



A. The Gospel doesn't seem like much, but it grows into an astounding Kingdom.

1. The early church went from 500 people to 10 million in 250 years. The church today is much larger. Based on outward signs we would say there are over a billion Christians in the world today. Growth!

2. The point is that the Gospel work seems insignificant. I.e.: preaching and teaching. People call for more political muscle and money and technology. This is not what makes the kingdom grow. The cross and the empty tomb grow the Kingdom because they show the forgiving love of God. The Good news of the risen Savior gives peace. People need this and are added to our number. Jesus has a worldwide Kingdom today.

B. Jesus used many parables to help his disciples. (pic) **33 With many similar parables he continued to speak the word to them, as much as they were able to hear. 34 He did not speak to them without a parable. But when he was alone with his disciples, he explained everything to them.**

1. Jesus taught in parables because he had not yet suffered and died for the sins of the people. If he spoke plainly, the disciples might try to prevent his arrest by the Jews. He also did not want interference from his enemies before his time to die had arrived. Also many of Jesus' parables were rooted in Old Testament parables, like the one we heard in Ezekiel 17. It might have helped the disciples understand God's work better.

2. After Jesus suffered and died he spoke plainly. His apostles also spoke plainly in their teaching. However, the vivid parables were easy to remember and there is no doubt the church used them going forward just as we do today.

3. As we celebrate Father's Day I would point you to one of Jesus' most famous parables, "The Prodigal Son." (Luke 15) This is not a Gospel story of the son's repentance, but of the father's forgiving love. There is nothing more powerful than knowing and believing that the heavenly Father embraces his sons and daughters as they return to him in repentance. These parables of grace grow the Kingdom in our hearts and in the hearts of the people of the world.

Conclusion: God's power in nature and in seeds is amazing. These seeds will continue to produce as long as the Creator commands them to do so.



Jesus wants us to appreciate the power of the word. Specifically, the Gospel is the power of

God for salvation. This is a word that we have been given to plant. The church grew from a few hundred people to hundreds of millions over time. That is God's grace in action. He has graced us with his forgiving and saving word. He wants us to bring it to others. It works! Amen.

