

SERMON FOR JUNE 13, 2021

TEXT: MARK 4: 26-34

THEME: GOD'S WORD WORKS

**26** And he said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. **27** He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. **28** The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. **29** But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come. **30** And he said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? **31** It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, **32** yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade." **33** With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it. **34** He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.

In the name of Jesus:

There are things in life that you can count on, they are what we call automatic. The sun comes up in the morning and the sun sets at night. The earth revolves around the sun once a year and the moon revolves around the earth once a month. In the springtime of the year the buzzards will always return to Hinckley Ohio, and the swallows will always return to Capistrano. These are occurrences that happen with regularity. You can always count on them happening. When that takes place, we say that it is automatic.

In many aspects of our high-tech world these days, we've come to think of things that are automatic to also be quick. We can set up automatic payments for our bills so that when we have a charge, our bank account automatically—instantaneously—pays it, and we don't have to worry about it. We can set up our contributions to the church automatically so that at any time we designate, our congregation gets the support it needs, and we don't have to think about it. No waiting. But automatic things also have their drawbacks: they can be too quick. Who of us hasn't sent a confusing or embarrassing text message to someone because our phone quickly auto-corrected what our chubby fingers tried to type, and it was off and gone before we caught it?

In our text for today Jesus tells us that the planted seed of God's Word grows God's Kingdom automatically. It isn't always quick, but God's Word Always Works. We're called simply to go about our vocations night and day and see how God provides growth for his kingdom—sometimes in the perfect *patient* time.

It isn't complicated. God's Word works. Always. Jesus tells us that in this parable, the man scatters seed upon the ground. There is no distinction on where it is sown, it is planted on all types of soil. It is sown everywhere.

Then Jesus says in the parable that the man goes about his business, day and night and the seed grows without his knowledge, he doesn't know how it grows, it just grows and produces fruit. The Bible says that the earth produces itself. That is to say, it grows automatically, without any further help. Growth takes place, and in its proper time, a plentiful harvest will result.

As Christians, we want the church to grow. And to make it happen, churches will resort to all sorts of techniques and programs in order to produce growth in the church. They will hear about something another church has done that was met with success, thinking that growth can be easily replicated. A new program, a new thing always works, doesn't it? And who of us doesn't have someone we know who we would like to go to church but doesn't? We think that there must be something we can do, something we can say, that will help that person come around to believe in Jesus! Maybe if we prayed harder, or used different words, or maybe if we said something differently things would be different and that person who we want to believe in Jesus would come to faith.

But the parable today tells us that growth doesn't depend upon any of us. Growth depends upon God. He alone brings the increase. Jesus says that "the Kingdom of God is like, a man scattering seed on the ground, the earth

produces itself, automatically first the blade and then the ear then the full grain appears.” Jesus has done all of the work, He has done all that is needed. Jesus died on the cross and rose from the grave to accomplish salvation for all. And his Word is planted around the world, in Christian Churches such as here at Redeemer, and elsewhere, and the Holy Spirit uses that Word bringing sinners to faith and a relationship with God. God’s Word doesn’t not return to Him empty, but it accomplishes exactly what God wants when He wants it to happen. It happens by His design, not by our effort, human pressure, or by badgering people into believing in Jesus. God grants the growth, automatically. It may not happen at the same time, in the same place or same way for every person, but it happens, according to God’s good pleasure. God alone works faith and keeps people in the faith. Our faith is built on Christ. This is His Church, and He has said that He alone will build His Church and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it.

So then is there anything that we can do? Yes! First, hear the Word, not once, or twice, but continually hear the Word, for God works through His Word, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. The Spirit works through the Word and the Word brings us Jesus and creates faith in Jesus, for no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the power of the Holy

Spirit. And as we grow in faith, we by the grace of God then share our faith with others in what we say and what we do.

Listen again to what Jesus says: “The man sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows, he knows not how.” God blesses us today by speaking to us His Word of grace, forgiveness and hope in Christ. Christ comes to us in the blessed Sacrament to strengthen our faith and to give us the assurance that we are His forgiven children. The Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit blesses us at the end of the service, so that now as His children we go forth from this place to go about our day to say business as God’s children living as His children, using our God given abilities to share the love of Christ and to sow the seed of His Word in the hearts and lives of those around us. We share the love and mercy of Christ in our homes, in our neighborhoods, and in the workplace.

And as we do we are confident, not in ourselves, but in the power of God working through His Word. For God’s will is this, He wants all to be saved and come to know the truth of His Love in Christ. And to that end He sends you and me out blessed today to be a blessing to others, confident in God’s promises for God’s Word works, always, to His glory and in the name of Jesus.

Amen