

Kingdom of God Part 7

Steve Berger May 15, 2016

The Kingdom of God is...

- 1) kingdom is rule and reign of God, 2) future heavenly realm, 3) present heavenly “taste,” 4) parables tell us what Kingdom is like now, how it functions, 5) Mark 4:3-20, Soils sets the tone for rest of parables in chapter... sower scatters seed/ Word... soil, spirit receives the Word... wayside, stony, thorny, good. One in four really bear fruit.
- **Measure**
 - **Mark 4:24-25**

Then He said to them, “Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.”

 - God does not “take away,” the enemy does

Your measured response to the Word of God determines your growth/maturity.

- **I Thessalonians 2:13**

For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.
- **Hebrews 4:2**

For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.
- human responsibility, measure is a significant part of your Kingdom growth

Today — looking at the balance between

Human Responsibility and Divine Ability

*The Parable of the **Scattered Seed** is only in Mark, right after the parables of the **Soils and Measure...***

- **Mark 4:26-29**

And He said, “The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.”
- man is anyone... seed is Word... seed sprouts and grows... man doesn't know how... it happens by itself... blade, head, full grain in the head... harvest time... ready to produce!

**Kingdom truth grows beyond man's limited understanding —
grows by Divine Ability!**

- “seed sprouts and grows yet he doesn't know how”
- how the seed/word grows is beyond our ability to understand- **Divine Ability!**
- **Isaiah 55:8-9**
“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

**Kingdom truth growing in me isn't limited
by my ability to understand the process!**

There is something bigger than me, happening in me, that isn't fully dependent on me. Praise God!

*Good news... even though you don't understand how, getting in the Word, and the Word getting in you, **will produce a harvest**. A time comes when God has grown that Word in you, and when you need its truth and power, it's there!!! Harvest time!!!*

**Kingdom truth grows beyond man's limited contribution —
grows by Divine Ability!**

- “seed sprouts and grows **by itself**”

**There is self-contained life in the seed/word
that we've done nothing to create!
It is strictly God's Ability to bring the life out of the seed/word**

- **Isaiah 55:10-11**
For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.
 - by God's pleasure and power
- **1 Corinthians 3:5-7**
Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.
 - two times God gives increase, growth, life
- **Hebrews 4:12**
For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.
 - so powerful and living it goes deep and critiques the thoughts and intents of our heart

**How you respond to that living powerful word working in you
determines your growth and maturity...
but the life and power of the word belongs to God alone**

***Great comfort...** success of my spiritual life doesn't depend on me creating life- I just have to posture myself to receive the life God gives!*

• **Philippians 2:12-13**

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

***Fun and fascinating...** in the 1960's a jar was found with seeds in it found on Masada, Israel; **seeds were 2000 years old**, from Herod's time. The seeds sat for decades. In 2005 they were planted — and grew. You can see photos of the Methuselah plant online.*

Question — *What kind of life/harvest does the seed/word produce in me as God gives it life?*

Answer — *Psalm 119 is all about the life, power, blessing of the word... ready... 21 benefits...*

Psalm 119

vs.9- cleanse way, heeding word preparing path for future

vs.11- hidden word in heart, not sin against You; vs.133- iniquity won't have dominion

vs.14- produces joy

vs. 18- allows us to see wonderful things

vs. 25- revives us when we're dry, (*states repeatedly*)

vs.28- strength

vs. 32- enlarges our heart- makes us free

vs. 41- know mercy and salvation

vs. 42- answers to enemies

vs.46- not ashamed, confused, cowardly

vs. 62- thanks in times of darkness

vs. 76- comfort

vs. 93- life

vs. 100- understanding, more than the ancients

vs. 105- lamp to feet, light to path

vs. 114- hope

vs.130- light and understanding to the simple

vs. 142- truth; vs.160- entirety of word is truth

vs.162- rejoice because great treasure

vs. 165- peace

vs.165- stability, composure

4 more for even 25...

Ps 107:20- God sent His word to heal

Joshua 1:8- success and prosperity

Jn 15:7- abide in word, word abide in you, answered prayer

Rom 10:17- faith

***Closing...** because there is so much life and power in the seed/word, when you mix it with good soil, it will overcome anything, you will get your harvest!*

Discussion Questions

- 1.** Read Hebrews 4:2. Why did the gospel not profit those who heard it?
- 2.** What does it mean that our job is being the soil? What kind of soil are you?
- 3.** Discuss the mystery of how the seed (Word) planted in you can *grow* — when you have done nothing to create it or plant it.
- 4.** Read 1 Corinthians 3:5-7. Which part of the planting, watering, or harvesting process have you been a part of in someone's life? Did it matter to you personally which part it was? Why or why not?
- 5.** Open your Bibles to Psalm 119. Choose several blessings that the Word gives us. Why are those particular ones so meaningful to you?