

No Worries: Just Scatter the Seeds



Mark 4:21-29

If you have your bibles, be opening to the gospel according to Mark as we continue our series. Yesterday was a great day. Yesterday, we actually got to get the tractors out. We already had them hooked to the chisel plow, we got to go down to Elbow Creek at Land Between the Lakes, and Dad and I got to chisel plow about a hundred and twenty acres yesterday. When I got home, we had a funeral that we needed to attend, so I came into the house, laid all of my stuff down, took the farm clothes off, and put them in the dirty clothes hamper, and the last thing I did was pulled this (ear bud) out of my ear. I don't know if you have one of these or not, but Casey got these for me. These are really neat, so I've been breaking them in this week. They come in a pair, so I reached down and laid this one where it goes where I wouldn't lose it and then I reached into my pocket to pull out the AirPods case, and I didn't have the case. I tried to backtrack to where I could have possibly left the case because I remembered distinctly getting it out of the tractor cab. Quickly, I ran out into the driveway where the farm truck was and I looked all the way through the truck. The AirPods case wasn't there. So now, I'm missing the companion to one of my earbuds and the case they come in, but Celisa and I had to get to the funeral, so

we had to leave. I said to her, "Honey, could we leave just a couple of minutes early because before I got into my truck I was in Dad's truck, and it's possible that when I was getting my lunchbox, water bottle, iPad, and phone out of his truck, I may have left the AirPods case in his truck." We went down to the shop where Dad parks his farm truck and it wasn't there. We went on to the funeral and then ate and came home. I started to finish this sermon, and I just couldn't get the sermon on my mind because I'm wondering where my other AirPods is and I remembered getting the case out of the tractor...maybe I didn't though, because it wasn't in either truck. Celisa said, "Maybe it is in the truck, why don't you go get it in the morning?" I had this thought...if it's not in the tractor, that means it fell between the tractor and when I got in Dad's truck...but then Dad took me to Elbow Creek to get my truck, so when I reloaded everything in my hands, if it fell out there, then it's in the field. And it's supposed rain before church is going to be over, and rain probably wouldn't be good on the AirPods...so at 9:00 last night, I left the house to go back to Land Between the Lakes to look for my AirPods. I didn't really believe they were in the tractor, so I took a flashlight. Then I thought if it's not beside the tractor and I have to look in that field, I better take two flashlights. So I took two flashlights, I left the house at 9:00 to go back to LBL last night, and just as soon as I got in the truck, I thought I had better call my executive assistant. So I texted her saying, "Sorry, I know it's late on Saturday night. Are you still up?" I got a 'yes' back. I said, "Is it ok for me to call you?" She said, "Yes." I said, "Casey, I don't know where my AirPods are but I heard it was possible that you could track where they're at." She said, "I'll check it out." So I'm driving to LBL, I get to the bridge, and she calls me back saying, "Bro. Ricky, the last time you used them was Elbow Creek." I thought that was amazing, except that's not where they are! It clocked the last field I was in, but I know they were in the tractor. We made a plan that when I get there, she would just buzz them and it would tell me where they were at. So she holds on the phone and I drive to the machinery shed first, knowing they're not in the tractor, but hoping they are. I've got my flashlight, so I pull into the machinery shed, and my lights are on bright and it shines on the back of the tractor and the chisel plow. I'm not looking at the tractor; I'm looking on the ground, exactly where

Dad parked his truck. Guess what I saw lying on the ground...my AirPods case! I opened it up and sure enough, there was the other AirPods. I put this one in there, closed it up, stuck it in my pocket, and praise the Lord for light because it was dark. Rain was coming. My AirPods wasn't hiding from me, but I did not know where it was. They were lost. It was dark. I needed light. Light revealed what was already there, and that was my AirPods on the ground. Hang on to that thought. Stand with me now as we open to Mark's gospel, chapter 4, and let's begin reading where Kory stopped last week. He introduced us to the famous parable of the soils.

Scripture

"And he said to them, "Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket, or under a bed, and not on a stand? For nothing is hidden except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret except to come to light. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." And he said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear: with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you. For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away." And he said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

(Prayer)

Father, we're going to be short on time, so we aren't going to read the rest of this section. We'll have to address it next week. Father, hold our attention. Let us understand this morning how important it is to hear and respond properly. Let us understand what causes us to hear and respond properly, and that's the seed that's been planted in us. Thank You Father for the privilege of gathering this morning. It's in Your precious Son's name we pray, amen.

We've got several family members here who attend other churches. Praise the Lord, our college is on Spring Break, so they are not here this morning or we wouldn't have gotten everyone in here today. We are so thankful for those of you who are guests of ours, family members of these couples who have brought themselves before us this morning and asking us to take a vow of raising their children with them.

The context here is Jesus in a boat. He's on the Sea of Galilee and there's a large crowd of people on the shore. Jesus begins to tell a story that had a line in it that absolutely shocked the audience. It caused them to say, "What?" He talked about a sower who went out to sow seed, and some of the seed fell on hard soil, some on rocky soil, and some on thorny soil. Now, the audience, because many of them farmed those Palestinian hillsides, that did not shock them. They knew that in their fields there was hard soil, rocky, soil, and weedy soil. But then Jesus concluded His parable by teaching about some of the seed falling on good soil. They had good soil, and Kory told us the average yield in Palestine was about five to seven bushels, and producing tenfold was max harvest. I think Kory told us that would be like a farmer getting two hundred bushel corn here. So when Jesus talked about seed falling on good ground and He said it produced thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and a hundredfold, all of those farmers went, "What?" "Did He say what I thought He said?" That's what He said. Verse 10 said when He was alone He interpreted that parable to His disciples. He basically told them to some has been given the secret to know the Kingdom of God, to some it's not been given, and He quotes the Old Testament. Then, He explains how there are different reactions to the good news of the Kingdom. Now this is important...if Jesus is in a boat, the crowd is all around, and verse 10 says when He was alone He explained the parable, then that means He probably didn't huddle them in the boat and explain the meaning. Mark is telling us in this story that later when Jesus was alone, (not in the boat; somewhere else) He explained the meaning of the parable. Verses 10-20 didn't happen while He was in the boat teaching, so you see that verse 21 follows verse 9, chronologically.

After He talked about the seed falling on four different soil types and four different reactions, and one of those being soil that would bring thirtyfold,

sixtyfold, and a hundredfold, then we have this view that is miracle soil. Everybody is wanting to have ground like that. When Jesus explains this parable, He's going to teach that He's talking about conditions of the heart. As Kory said last week, how you really know your heart is by what you hear. Therefore, Jesus is going to say, "He who has ears, let him hear."

Here is what Jesus says next...Does a person bring a lamp inside (you imagine it is the house) and then go set it on the table and set a bushel basket on top of it? What is the answer? No. Now some of them are still thinking about that thirtyfold, sixtyfold, a hundredfold harvest. He says, does anybody bring a lamp into the house and then go hide it under the bed? What is the answer? No. What do you do with it? You bring the lamp from the outside into the inside where it's dark. You don't put it under a bushel, you don't put it under the bed; you put it on a lampstand so that it gives light to everything that's in the house. Here's what Jesus says next, and the crowd is again going to go, "What?" He says people hide things so that ultimately what they're hiding will be made manifest. People do things in secret so that ultimately the light will be turned on and reveal what they were doing in secret. "What?" Uh no, Jesus...that's not how it works. How many of you hide something so that later somebody will find what you hid? No! You hide it so nobody knows what you've got! When you do something in secret, you don't do it in secret so someone will come and turn the light on and expose what you're doing. You do it in secret because what you're doing is something you don't want anybody to know about.

Then Jesus says, "He who has ears, let him hear." Remember, in the first parable, Kory taught us that it's your ears that are revealing what's in your heart. What you listen to, what you feed yourself through your ears is revealing the spiritual capacity of your heart. To paraphrase, Jesus again says to the crowd, if you have a spiritual ear, listen, pay attention; focus on Me. so He's picturing us listening to the teaching in a crowd of people and He says what you use to measure will be measured back to you, and you'll be given more, for to whom is given, more will be given. To the one who has a little, even that which he has will be taken away. Watch this. There was a group in the crowd that day that just had this much capacity to listen, but there was another group that had this much more capacity to

listen. There was another group that had even more capacity to listen, and another still that had much more capacity to listen. Jesus is saying if you've got spiritual ears to listen and you focus in and pay attention to Me, what you brought that I'm going to fill; I will give you more that it can hold! I am going to have to give you something even bigger than what you've got. If Jesus just said, what I'm teaching you is going to be bigger than what you've brought to hold it in, I wouldn't bring something small; I would bring a five-gallon bucket! When my five-gallon bucket got full, I would go drag in a fifty-five gallon bucket, amen! Do you have ears to hear this? If I were sitting here and this did not excite me, I would be scared to death because it's possible some of us here may have such a small capacity to hear that we're eventually going to lose that capacity and not be able to hear at all. When we lose that capacity to hear spiritually, we'll be damned eternally, separated from God forever and ever. But if we come before Him and approach Him with a bigger cup, He will fill it and then give us a bigger cup. He is going to fill that and give us a bigger cup. What is He trying to say? He is trying to say there is a group of people in that crowd that is good soil, and they have the capacity to bring thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and a hundredfold, and it's directly related to their ears and the spiritual hunger they have. Does that make sense?

Here's the question. Why would God give some of us the ability to bring a thirtyfold harvest, others a sixtyfold harvest, and others to bring forth a hundredfold harvest? Kory reminded us what this is a picture of is that salvation is a miracle. Salvation is the miracle of a transformed life. God does with you abundantly more than anybody can even imagine. He does abundantly more with us than what we are capable of doing because He produces in us a thirty, sixty, hundredfold harvest. Why does He do that? Is He doing that in your life so that He can put a bushel over you? Is He doing that so He can hide you in the corner somewhere? Is He doing that so you can just blend into a crowd of people somewhere? NO! The reason God deems you and I good soil is because He wants to put our life on a lampstand. He doesn't want to hide us; He wants to display us. Catch this...here is the secret of the Kingdom, here's the secret of hearts...no one knows what kind of heart they've got, hard, rocky, thorny, or good, so do you know what the light does? The light exposes your heart. I'm going to

let that sink in. The miracle of salvation that God is doing in you is a light that reveals to others the condition of their heart. People have to hear, and God uses us so they can hear. Let me translate this for you. This church, like all other Baptist churches will meet, their pastor will stand on a platform or stage, and there will typically be a pulpit. The reason I stand up on the stage is not because you elevate me; it is because you elevate the preached Word on a Sunday morning. Do you realize how honored I am to have a platform on Sunday morning and get to influence the people I get to influence with the preached Word of God? But this isn't my only platform. I have some cows, I have a farming operation, I have some likes that I like to do where I get to be around other people, and I take those platforms just as seriously as I take this platform. You have a platform. Everyone in here who is good soil has a platform where God elevates you. It may be at work, school, a ballpark, a club, and there are a whole lot of people around you. There are many people who claim to be Christians, but they live as if they've got a bushel on top of them. They live as if they're hiding in a corner, and they're never going to let the light of the gospel come out. They've got this thought where you do one thing on Sunday, but the rest of the week, you just live like the world lives. No, Jesus says I gave you your job, your hobby, the place where you recreate, the school, a team, a class so you would be light. Now let me tell you what this is teaching. This is teaching that the life we live God uses as a light to reveal what secret in somebody's life, and that's the condition of their heart because you can't really see the condition of somebody's heart until the light is turned on. When the light is turned on and they hear the gospel, it will reveal whether or not they are hard, stony, weedy, or good.

From that, Jesus goes into this parable. He says, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground," he slept and he rose, night and day, and the seed sprouted and grows, and he doesn't have a clue how. The earth produced by itself, first a blade, then an ear, then a full grain, but the man knows there is going to be a harvest, so he's got his sickle ready. Now listen to me. If you were here last week, you might have gotten this thought that there is some miracle grow soil out there that will bring thirty, sixty, one hundredfold harvest, but Jesus never compared the Kingdom of God to that. We know He does with His disciples because He's

trying to teach His disciples the secret of the Kingdom. Some of us are going to be privileged to receive the Kingdom of God, and in our lives, the Kingdom of God will produce this tremendous hundredfold harvest, possibly.

I want you to watch this, especially you gardeners and farmers...in the first parable, a sower went out to sow, but when Jesus compared the Kingdom of God, He doesn't compare it to a farmer who had intentionally went out into his field and sowed it with seed. See, the reason I was chisel plowing yesterday is because I'm getting soil ready over at LBL to plant corn in a couple of weeks. After we chisel the cornstalks and turnover, we'll come back with a multi-till instrument and we'll work up a seedbed and because we're a small farm, we'll take a little drill, eight rows, thirty inches apart, and we'll intentionally plant corn about seven or seven and a half inches apart. I want to be totally honest with you. Yesterday, it was dry enough in LBL that I could have planted corn, and I was tempted. I thought, no, it is way too cold. But here is what I know will happen, it's the same thing that happened last year. I had the ground ready when it was dry and cold, but then it got warm and it was wet. A farmer can't plant if it's dry and cold and he can't plant if it's warm and wet. A farmer has got to wait for the conditions to be just right. This is the farmer in the first story, and that's you and me. As a matter of fact, let's just be honest, some of us have been working with neighbors and associates for years, and we've never shared the gospel with them. It's just never been the right time to plant. It's either been too hot or too cold. We're still waiting for that right moment! That's the reason none of us are sowing. We've got the planter ready. We're tilling. We're disking, but then it's raining again. We disk again, then it rains again, and we disk again, but we never sow the seed. Why? Because we think it is about us and them. We think it's about everything being right in my life, and everything being right in their life, and if everything is right in their life and in my life, then we can talk to someone about Jesus.

Jesus said the Kingdom of God is as if a man scattered seed on the ground. The word for scattered is not the word for sow in the first parable. The word means he just threw some seed on the ground. He's not even called a sower! He's just a man, a man who gets up one day and it's what

he decides to do. He doesn't know how seeds work in the ground, but he knows they do work in the ground, so he just tosses some seeds on the ground. Then he goes to sleep. He gets up the next day and does his own thing. He goes back to sleep that night, gets up the next morning, does his own thing, and he never goes and checks the seed! What do you think the farmers are doing? They're going, "What?" Nobody would sow seed and not go check on the seed! Let me tell you what a good farmer does, and I'm a good farmer. The moment we plant the seed, (in KY if you plant the seed early, it's going to take about seven to ten days, ten to fourteen days for it to come up) you're going to check it the next morning. When you see the first sprout, you don't leave it in the ground; you pick it out and bring it home. I say, "Celisa, look! Our corn is sprouting!" I pick another for Dad and another for the neighbors. After about seven days, Celisa says, "If you don't leave the corn in the ground, we're not going to have a harvest!" That seed will sprout and then it will start to grow, and I want to document every stage of that. That's what a good farmer does. This guy isn't a farmer, He just scatters the seed and goes to sleep and does his own thing because he doesn't know how, but he knows the seed will do what the seed is supposed to do.

Please tell me you get this! This is the parable of the miracle of the seed. What Jesus is teaching is that it's really not about the soil. If last week you got the idea that salvation was about you; you missed it. Jesus said the Kingdom of God is like a man who just scatters seed on the ground, and then he forgets about it because he knows it will do what it's supposed to do. Can I be honest with you? Isn't that why some of us have quit sowing the seed? We sowed the seed in somebody's life and it looked like Satan just came and took it away, and they never responded. So we quit sowing seed in that guy's life. You had that other guy, and it looked like he was real! Joy, everything was going good, and then there came a drought and he faded away. We are 0 for 2. That was my best friend. There was that other guy, my family member, who I thought really got it! The next thing you know, the weeds came in and they never bore fruit either, and I'm 0 for 3. Now I'm confessing things I've never done, I'm wondering what's wrong with me, I'm taking blame for everything that's going wrong in the people's lives that I thought God brought me in for, and I've made it all

about me. Now, I just want to hide under the bed. I just want God to put a bushel on me. I'm discouraged. I'm going to quit. It seems like it's all about me, or it's all about them. Therefore, it's got to be all about us. Don't look at me that way; I know we're a grace church and we're not legalistic, but there isn't one of us in here who does not thrive off of results and performance! It's why there are men who have quit preaching and gone back to secular work. They get more reward in secular work than they do preaching the gospel because they look at a congregation every week and see nothing happening, so they just quit. It's why they don't teach Sunday school anymore. It's why people have given up on the church. Listen to this truth! The Kingdom of God is like a man who just sowed the seed, he trusted in the seed, he took his hands off of it and said this is not about me. He said this isn't even about the soil; it's about the seed because once that seed went into the ground, he knew it was going to germinate, and start to grow. The truth is you don't know what's going on in a person's life, just like you don't know if that seed is really germinating and start to sprout. But the earth now has the seed, and after about ten to fourteen days, a blade appears. That blade grows and puts on a corn ear, and then that corn ear becomes full grain.

Listen to what Jesus says through Mark...the earth, by itself, brought forth first the blade, then the corn, then the grain. This phrase, 'by itself,' is a Greek word for where we get our word, 'automatic' from. Have you ever dealt with things that are automatic? This is teaching that you put the seed in the ground and the ground just does what the seed is already programmed to do, and that's just hold the seed. It's the seed doing its thing. The seed in the ground is going its thing. The ground is not doing it to the seed. The ground has no life! The seed has the life. The seed germinates in the ground, begins to grow, and the next thing you know, in the ground you see the seed, you see the growth. The Bible is teaching we just scatter the seed. It's not miracle grow soil, it's miracle grow seed. We scatter the seed in a person's life and the seed gets revealed in that person's life. That is why I entitled the sermon, 'No Worries.' I am quitting worrying because it's not on me. In your life or in the life of the people that God has raised me up in, my part is to live the transformed life that reveals I'm a thirtyfold, sixtyfold, hundredfold person who scatters the seed so God

can do in somebody else's life what He is doing in my life. I am going to quit trying to fix some of you guys. It's really frustrating to try and fix somebody that doesn't want to be fixed, and I begin to think poor, pitiful me. I begin to think that as a pastor, as a preacher, a teacher, a Christian, and a person. Praise God for this parable! I'm just light, and you're just light. We're just supposed to let other people see what God is doing in us, and as we scatter the seed, that's between them and God. Can I be honest with you? My hope is not in them, so I'm not going to pick out who I think is good ground. I'm not going to let somebody who rejects cause me to think maybe they are hard soil, rocky soil, or weedy soil. I'm just going to sow the seed, and I'm going to trust the gospel to do what only the gospel can do, and that's bring the harvest.

Now, what is the gospel? Mark is trying to get to the cross because to him, the gospel is about Jesus dying for us so that He can live in us, through us, and produce His life in us, which is a thirty, sixty, hundredfold harvest. I'm only responsible for letting God do what God wants to do in my life. While He is doing what He's doing in my life, I'm going to scatter the good news that He didn't just die for me; He died for you. He doesn't just want to live in me and through me; He wants to live in you and through you. Let's not ever be discouraged again because it's not about us and it's not about them, it's about the seed, miracle grow seed. Therefore, let's leave this morning with no worries. Let's just scatter the seed.