

When It Looks Like God Isn't Doing Anything

"While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest ... shall not cease" (Gen. 8:22). We are also told, "Be not deceived. God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, that will he also reap" (Gal. 6:7).

Jesus taught the truths of the kingdom of heaven by parables, a story that uses something familiar to the hearers to explain something that is not familiar.

The parable of the sower and the seed is one that we must understand if we truly want to transform our life and the way we live. This is a parable taught in Matthew, Mark and Luke. The importance of this parable is found in Mark 4:13: "Then He said to them, 'Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?'" This Scripture should burn in our hearts. If we don't get this, how are we going to understand anything else about the kingdom?

If you discover "the seed principle" this parable teaches, you will discover a secret that will transform your life!

Luke tells us very plainly "The seed is the word of God" (8:11). This parable is about the sower, the seed and the soil. The sower and the seed are always the same; they never change. The only variable in this parable is the soil.

The success of the seed, the Word of God planted in your heart, has nothing to do with the seed itself; it has everything to do with the soil of your heart where it is planted.

Sometimes we feel that God's Word is not working in our life. We feel discouraged and don't understand what is happening. We must keep the soil of our heart cultivated and keep the weeds

of doubt and unbelief out of the garden of our heart. We must plant our own garden and keep it watered to stop the temptations and cares of this world from overtaking the seeds planted in our heart.

Proverbs 4:23 tells us, "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." This is a warning that we must take seriously. The condition of the soil of our heart will determine the growth and the fruit of the seed. It has the potential to give the seed life or starve it and let it die.

How do we guard our heart and keep the ground fertile to receive the seed? First Thessalonians 5:16-18 tells us how: "Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

One thing we must understand, life is a process. After a farmer plants the seed, there are several steps before the harvest comes. As we tend to the garden of our heart, we must learn to take the fertilizer, the hurt and heartaches that have been dumped on our life, and use them to grow roses.

James 1:2-4 shares another key to the growth of the seed: "My brothers, count it all joy when you fall into diverse temptations, knowing that the trying of your faith develops patience. But let patience perfect its work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing." It is a testing of your faith. Faith is a spiritual force, and the trial that comes against your faith is in the natural world. Various trials—finances, health, relationships, addictions—all are formed to come against your faith in God to stop the promises of God from coming to fruition in your life.

Proverbs 17:3 says, "The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, but the Lord tries the hearts." God knows what is in your heart, and you need to know what is in your

heart. A test is not about what you don't know but about what you do know! Patience gives us the ability to endure when we have absolutely no control of the outcome.

How do we walk in patience while we are waiting? We rejoice always, pray without ceasing and give thanks that God is in the situation with us! This is the will of God! When you are in His will, you can hear His voice and follow Him (John 10:4). Praying without ceasing is simply an attitude worked in your heart by understanding God's heart toward you. It is acknowledging your need of Him. Rejoicing and giving thanks will turn your heart toward Him and keep the garden of your heart cultivated to receive His joy and peace.

Have you ever looked at a popcorn seed and wondered how this little hard seed can produce such a nice, fluffy piece of popcorn? This popcorn seed has moisture inside it, and when it is put in the microwave and the heat is applied to it, the moisture starts to expand, putting pressure on the seed and it brings forth the popcorn promised! When trials come our way and the heat is on, do we rejoice in the Lord, letting patience have its perfect work, or do we fall for the trap of the enemy?

Understanding the secret of the seed gives us hope.

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