

MEDITATION 39

Mark 4: 26-29

Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground ²⁷ and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. ²⁸ The earth produces of itself first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. ²⁹ But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle because the harvest has come."

"The Kingdom of God is as if..." How do you describe something so different than what you're used to in the world you live in? The kingdom of God is so very different than the kingdoms of the world people are used to living in and navigating through. Jesus will spend a lot of teaching time trying to describe the kingdom of God way of being in the world.

But now, early in his ministry, a lot of such describing involves planting seed and waiting in faith and hope for growth to happen. But what kind of growth and what kind of produce is believed and hoped to be harvested?

In the kingdoms of the world, surviving and thriving have to do with gathering and storing up as much produce as you can get for yourself. It's about competing with your neighbour in a world where material resources are limited and only the strongest and most competitive will survive. It's about grabbing what you can get for yourself and reaching the top of whatever mountain you have to climb, pushing others out of the way or climbing over them.

"But it must not be so among you" Jesus will keep telling his followers. There is a different way. And even though it is so very different than what you are taught and pressured to live in a world where fear grips you, this alternative kingdom way of being in the world will give you a power, strength, courage and even moments of peace that nothing within the kingdoms of the world can give you even if you've achieved and received all they may offer you. What you will lose in your striving and grasping will be greater than any material and social gains you may get for yourself.

But it takes faith and hope in the dark of what often is, to believe that the seeds of love in us will bear fruit in the worldly kingdoms we inhabit. Jesus is trying to establish a foothold of God's kingdom in the world. And he wants to plant seeds in those who are open to receive. Have such seeds been planted in you? And are you a planter of seeds in others? How may your alternative kingdom of God way of being and relating plant the kinds of seeds that may not only grow in time, but bear fruit in the lives and ways of relating in others?

This is our purpose and this is our joy as kingdom of God people and followers of Jesus the seed planter. As the seed grows in us and begins to bear fruit, so we become planters of seeds in others with our learning-to-better-love way of relating.

What do you think?

PRAYER: The seed has been planted in us, O God... Yes... And yet, sometimes we wonder how much it has grown or how much it may also have stalled growing, or even begun to wither...

We feel good about ways we have learned to better love, especially as the world pressures us to relate quite differently with people who challenge us in particular, O God. But sometimes we also falter and fall, as we are pushed and pulled by the currents of survival at all costs and reactivity towards all needs...

Sometimes we just don't feel well, O God and self-pity rather than compassion rise up in us... Sometimes, we're just tired, overwhelmed and angry too... Sometimes there is a hardness in us that blocks the soft, fluid flow of your grace... And sometimes, we just lose hope of what can yet be given what currently is...

Open us up to receive fresh seeds of your kingdom love, O God. Send your Holy Spirit, the same Spirit that flowed through Jesus... May it flow through us at this time we are living... We pray this way in Jesus' name... Amen.