

EVERY TRACK EVERY WEEK

WEEK 27: Leader Study Guide

The Parable of the Growing Seed

-Welcome!

-Intro: Thanks for being here! Revisit last week's points

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*Exchange numbers or invite attendees to join your ETEW Facebook group.

INTRO:

Hi, and welcome to Every Track Every Week. My name is _____ and I am involved with Texas FCA Motocross through _____. I've been involved with FCA MX for ____ years and my favorite thing about the ministry is_____.

This week's discussion is based upon episode #49 of our podcast "The Gospel Driven Athlete" titled, "The Parable of the Growing Seed." This week, we are going to discuss what the Kingdom of God is, what some of our roles in this Kingdom are, and how this Kingdom grows from such small beginnings. We hope you find great rest and encouragement through this week's study!

Ice Breaker Question:

Who remembers back in science class what all was required for a seed to grow?

-sunlight, moisture, nutrients, chemical reactions, certain temperature ranges, a lack of damage from the environment...

-Lot's of other scientific mumbo jumbo that most of us don't fully get right?

Follow up question: What is required to create the fastest motocrosser on the planet?

-the right bike, great support, proper nutrition, training, riding coach, lack of injury...

-the point is this- similar to the concept of what it takes to make a seed grow, the things it takes to make a rider like Ryan Dungey so much faster than your fastest local pro rider are complicated. There's a LOT that goes into it. With modern technology, we can specify HOW many things happen these days, and we can often even recreate these circumstances in a laboratory, but we can't create from scratch. Only God can do that.

-It seems the more we learn and the more knowledge we gain the more we may think we are in control. If we plant seeds, do we make it grow? We may give it every opportunity to grow, because we know what it takes and the best environment for the seed to be in we give it the best probability to grow, but do not think for a second that you or I can make the seed grow. With motocross, we could give any number of kids the opportunities that Dungey or Tomac had, we could even exactly replicate every step that Tomac or Dungey took throughout their career, but most still would not end up like them. There is something beyond our control here, for Dungey or Tomac it was something inside of them combined with opportunity that allowed them to become who they are. Back to the topic at hand, with the seeds, no farmer has the ability to make a seed grow. They choose the best seed, prepare the land as best they can, and pray that the harvest is plentiful, but they can never guarantee the harvest because they do not make the seed grow.

(Leaders Read) Mark 4:26-29



The Parable of the Growing Seed

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."

1) Within Biblical parables, it is important to look at the number of characters involved and determine what or who they represent... So, in this parable that we just read, we basically have one guy, some seed, the earth, and a crop. Who and/ or what do you think these characters represent?

What is the Kingdom of Heaven?

-As we talked about last week, The Kingdom of Heaven is Christ's Kingdom. He is the King and He is advancing his Kingdom. It is not a completely a physical Kingdom consisting of land, or money, or political power. The Kingdom of Heaven is spiritual, mental, present, and eternal. God desires all of us to put our faith in Christ and the finished work of the cross. By doing so, we are adopted into God's family, Christ's Kingdom.

Who is the guy who scatters the seed?

This guy represents the body of Christ, the Church... us... followers of Christ. This man isn't a special farmer or specially trained to scatter seed. He is just a man. "Man" here be a man or a woman for sure. If you are in Christ, then you are represented by this man.

What is the seed that is cast?

The seed represents the Word of God, specifically the Gospel. The seed is the good news of Jesus Christ....that he is the Lord who became flesh to live the perfect life only to give it up for us and to take our punishment and shame on the cross. But the good news reminds us that he was not swallowed up in death. He defeated death and the grave and rose again. Now he offers us eternal life and desires us to be in his Kingdom for all eternity. This good news, the seed, has to be spread, it has to be shared.

What is the earth?

-The earth....well that's pretty self-explanatory. We are talking about the entire earth. Most of us will have opportunity to spread seed, share the gospel, locally near our homes, in our jobs, etc. But some of us will be called to missions and we will spread seed to people all over the world.

What is the harvest?

-When people respond in faith to the gospel that is shared with them we have the privilege to see the harvest. We have the increasable blessing of walking with that person into the family of Christ.

2) What role does the man play in this parable? What is he responsible for?

-Man (men and women) have two roles in this story. The first role is to spread the seed. We are the ones who share the gospel and tell people of our risen savior Jesus Christ.



ROMANS 10:17 says, *“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”* In nature there are some seeds that catch the wind and drift off, there are others that are transported by animals or other means. It’s pretty incredible how God designed it all to work. But in this case, this seed is only planted by the hands of men and women. No one stumbles on to truth, unless I guess they stumble on to a bible. But we are the ones charged with sewing the seed.

-Then we see the second thing we are charged with. We are the ones who put the sickle to the harvest. We are charged with gathering the harvest and bringing it in to the store houses. That is, we are the ones who walk with those who come to faith. We bring them to our awesome bible believing churches and help them get plugged in with other believers. Notice this happens “at once”, or immediately when the harvest is ripe. We are not to wait, there are too many things that can ruin the harvest if left on its own out in the open. When someone comes to Christ, we need to give quick attention to them to help them get plugged in and make sure that they are not left alone to wither away.

-So, we are the ones called to sow the seed, to share the gospel. Then we are the ones who are blessed with reaping the harvest.

3) What is the man NOT responsible for? What does he have NO control over?

-It is very clear that man is not responsible for the growth of the seed. We cannot control what happens after the seed is sown. Just as we see in the parable, and we talked about at the opening of the podcast, it is not our responsibility, nor is it in our control, to bring the harvest. The seed grows or doesn’t grow because of things beyond our control. There are plenty of people who can tell you how the process of germination happens. They can tell you the steps of the lifecycle of the plant. But they cannot make it happen. Within a seed is the life of a plant...and more than that there is the preparations for another sowing and another growth. No matter how much someone understand how this happens, no one can make it happen!

4) Who then is responsible for the growth?

-In this passage alone, we are not specifically told who causes the seed to grow. We only know that the sower of the seed doesn’t do it and doesn’t know how. Thankfully we have the whole bible and we know that we should always study scripture in light of the whole bible. When you take on short passage out of context you open yourself up to missing the true point and ending up down a road of bad teaching. A lot of so-called pastors and teachers do this often. That is why it is so important to study the word of God through the lens of context and whole bible theology.

-To answer the question, we can go back to last week’s scripture. It is Christ who advances his kingdom. It is Christ who causes the seed to grow. It is the beckoning call of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the listener that causes the seed to take root.

-Romans 1:16. *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.”* We share the gospel, but the power of the gospel, the power of Christ, is what causes the seed to take root.



-Hebrews 4:12 *“For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”*

-Jonah 2:9 *“Salvation is of the Lord”*

-1 Cor. 3:6 *“I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave growth.”*

5)What does this parable tell us about Jesus?

-Christ is the sovereign Lord. As we discussed last week, God is in control of this world and we already know the end of the Story. Jesus cares deeply about every individual on this planet and he wants all to hear His Gospel...and it is through hearing His Gospel that He saves people. He has given us, his church, the charge of sowing the seed. And he has blessed us with the opportunity to reap in the harvest. But it is Christ who causes the Word to take root and change a man's life. It is Christ who is responsible for the growth....for a man's *“heart of stone to be replaced with a heart of flesh”* (Ezekiel 36:26), for a man's anger, jealousy, and pride to be replaced with joy, contentment, and humility. Jesus is the one who has what we need. He is the one who gives us the ability to believe and trust knowing that we are secure in Him.

6)How should the realities of this parable inform our lives, thoughts, and actions.

-First it should take the burden off of us to save people. We are not called to save people. We are called to sew the seed and we need to be ready in any moment to share our Hope that we have in Christ alone. We are also to be ready to reap a harvest. When someone is ready to come into the family of Christ when they have put their faith in Christ, we are to come alongside them, to encourage them, and to instruct them. Some will Sew, some will reap the harvest, But Christ will cause the Growth. Be ready in and out of season.

-Lets pray. We will meet right here next week! Same time!

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