

FAITH WORDS

TALK SERIES

Divine Order

The earth produces crops all by itself,
first the stalk, then the head, then the full head of grain.

Mark 4:28 (CEB)

Consider the words “amber waves of grain”. What comes to your mind most readily? Is there a deeply held memory leading you along country roads and highways in Kansas, North Dakota, or Texas panhandle farmlands? Some of you will think directly of lyrics in *America the Beautiful*. The words alone, and the brief line in Katharine Lee Bates music has never been about the landscape to me. The limited farming experience I had through my teen years taught me much about the Divine Order of life. Wheat fields were an education I’ll not forget.

The words from Mark 4:28, all nineteen of them in the Common English Bible, match what I was taught about the nature of reproducing life. Several years ago, I wrote a Toastmasters competition speech tilted “Lessons from the amber waves of grain.” My theme was how *volunteering and serving* works through stages. Like Mark’s description, the life of wheat, corn, or apples cannot do without the other global elements to reproduce. The natural order in Mark’s writing parallels God’s creation in the physical, cerebral, and spiritual cycles of human life.

Mark’s words describe the order of grain reproduction beginning with the stalk, then the head, then the cluster of grain. There is indeed a spiritual law and order that governs life. By consciously aligning will and action with the naturally orderly working of the Universe, we tap into a wellspring of abundant inspiration and creative power. Through nature, the spirit provides a rich supply of ideas uniquely suited to body and soul.

Divine Order is critical to keep our earth a beautiful place to live. It amazes me that the outcome provides multiple results...all stunning. It’s difficult to compare the Amazon Rain Forest to the Sahara Desert, but both are beautiful in their own way. Each provides life an intriguing and precious picture of the functioning of creation. I’m intrigued that the giant trees in the forest, and the desert plants go through the same reproduction process. Lingering beauty follows the same order...seed, stem or trunk, leaves, fruit...before the cycle resumes.

There is another very important part of the process. The speech I wrote and delivered was about the impact on humanity when we *volunteer and serve*. Many of you give to help with the missions provided at our church in addition to community civic organizations. Often it seems insignificant when we simply pack a meal for families in our neighborhoods. The labor seems mundane and without seeing the gratitude in the eyes of recipients, we miss our contribution’s

importance. With that in mind, it is evident the nineteen words in Mark left out a very important part of the process. I believe the missing element is the *stubble*. When I asked the listeners to think of themselves as stubble, I could see the question marks and doubt in their faces. Admittedly, there is very little beauty in the prickly remains of the stalk that lifted the grains. Travelers speed by high plains wheat fields without seeing the impact of once proud stalks living on as seemingly unimportant stubble.

Each time we serve families, they, and we are blessed. Service and care are much like the stubble that is plowed back into the ground, or the leaves that fall to rest and decay on the forest floor. They are the nourishment for the next phase of divine order. Volunteer service leaves a little part of ourselves for the purpose of nurturing, loving, and supporting beneficiaries of our action.

It never ceases to amaze me how serving is viewed as mundane and unglamorous. Christlike care for those who are hungry, impoverished, oppressed, thirsty, sick, and imprisoned will instill excitement and allure for you caring servants. Assuming the role of decaying stubble, we nourish and instill joy in the lives of people we sometimes know personally, and often never see or know. Without stubble (you volunteers and servants) to provide nourishment to plants and people in need, the cycle of good will and peace ends. Our challenge is to keep the love and support for others in motion.

Thank you for the good you do for all God's creatures.

Peace Always

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