

Realize Our Dreams for God's Kingdom

Reflections on some kingdom
parables and our relationships

God is at work in our world: join Him

SETTING THE STAGE: KINGDOM PARABLES FROM MARK

Mark 4:1-20

- People respond differently to the Gospel, so don't be surprised.
- “The parable of the sower informs and warns disciples that although obstacles beset the ministry of Jesus, it will produce a harvest beyond compare.” (Edward, PNTC)

Mark 4:26-29

- The Kingdom of God continues to grow even if we don't see its growth. God is active and brings about a harvest.
- “The coming of the kingdom of God is likened to a process of growth but a process strangely independent of human activity. Despite inauspicious beginnings and the absence of human involvement, the seed contains within itself fruit-bearing potential.” (Edwards)

Mark 4:30-32

- The point of the parable seems to be that while the kingdom of God may appear to have insignificant and unnoticeable beginnings (i.e., in the ministry of Jesus), it will someday (i.e., at the second advent) be great and quite expansive.
- The kingdom, however, is not to be equated with the church, but rather the church is an expression of the kingdom.

Guiding principles

- God is working! We may plan, sow and water – but God gives the increase. We cannot do what only God does but we can do what God requires (1 Cor. 3:7-8).
- As God brings about the growth, we must be doing what God demands. Relationships drive our participation by God's grace in what He is doing.

Our number one priority

**OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD –
ABIDE IN CHRIST**

Our focus

- As we abide in Christ our focus is properly aligned with what God is doing – it is all about Jesus. We hear and obey His Word.
- Jesus becomes the focus of our ministry. We know that our ministry is not based upon our rhetoric, our wisdom but on the Gospel and God's wisdom revealed by His Spirit (see 1 Corinthians 2).

Our passions

- Jesus' compassion becomes ours. We have compassion on those without a shepherd (Matthew 9:35-38). Love for the lost invigorates our activity.
- Unceasing prayer marks us. As we pray we teach our people by example that they too should pray and be a worker.
- (There are more workers in the harvest.)

Our identity

- We are nothing more than servants and stewards of the mysteries of God – the revealed truth of the Gospel (1 Cor. 4:1,2).
- By God's grace we are wise master builders laying the foundation of the Gospel. Jesus Christ is that foundation (1 Cor. 3:10,11).
- We are a fragrance of Christ to God and our confidence and competence is from God (2 Corinthians 2:15, 3:1-5).

Equippers for the work of ministry
(Ephesians 4:11-16)

OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH DISCIPLES AND NON-DISCIPLES

Area 1 – The Gospel

- For the disciple: we are actively training them to share the Gospel in a clear and appropriate way.
- For the non-disciple: we share the Gospel that they may enter into a relationship with Jesus.
- We always ask: How many people are sharing the Gospel? How many people are hearing the Gospel today?

Area 2 - Discipleship

- For the new disciple: we have a short-term discipleship process to get them started. In fact, we teach our people how to begin this with a new believer – starting with how to share the Gospel with their *oikos*.
- For the disciple: we help them to move through a long-term discipleship process. We lovingly help all disciples to be servants.

Area 3 - Leadership

- Leadership is relationship. Much of what is learned is learned by example.
- We practice: Model, Assist, Watch and Love in our process of developing leaders.
- We mentor and help our leadership to mentor others in leadership.
- We help them to understand leadership from Jesus not corporate models.

A practical model

- In essence I have prepared you to see how we not only plant a church but continue to see it effectively multiply.
- Foundational to it is that God is working and we are abiding in Christ.
- The following illustration gives you five essential parts to any church planting and strengthening.

