

The Harvest Principle

Lesson # 43 (Mk. 4:26-29; COL 62-69; Rev. 14:14-20)

Our lesson today centers around the parable which is recorded in Mark 4:26-29. Though the parable is short, we shall find that it teaches profound lessons concerning the work of saving souls. It also illustrates the process of spiritual birth, growth and maturation in the Christian life. We shall also discover in this parable the principal reason why the Second Coming of Jesus has been so long delayed since 1844. Let's begin our study with the reason why Jesus told the parable in the first place.

Historical Occasion

1. Which parable had Jesus just uttered when He told this one? "The parable of the _____ excited much questioning." (COL 62)
2. In what sense had the populace misunderstood the parable of the sower? "Some of the hearers gathered from it that Christ was not to establish an _____ kingdom, and many were _____ and perplexed." (COL 62)

Note: The people of Christ's day expected Him to establish an earthly kingdom. But in the parable of the sower, Jesus taught that the principles of His kingdom must be implanted in the heart before His literal kingdom could be established. This idea, being foreign to the hearers, left them deeply perplexed.

3. Why did Jesus tell the parable of Mark 4:26-29 to the perplexed crowd? "Seeing their perplexity, Christ used other _____, still seeking to turn their thoughts from the hope of a _____ kingdom to the work of God's _____ in the soul." (COL 62)

Symbols of the Parable

1. Who is represented by the husbandman in this parable? "The husbandman. . . can be no other than _____." (COL 62)
2. What is represented by the sower of the seed? "But the sower of the seed represents those who _____ in Christ's _____." (COL 63)

Note: The sower in the parable of the sower is clearly identified as the Son of man. In this parable, the sower represents the followers of Christ. There is no contradiction. These two parables, taken together, teach that Christ sows the seed through human instruments.

3. Why can't the sower in this parable be a symbol of Christ? "Christ does not _____ over His charge, but watches it day and night. He is not _____ of how the seed grows." (COL 63)

4. What does the seed represent? “The seed is the _____ of God.” (Lk. 8:11)

Physical Laws of the Harvest

1. What has God implanted within the seed? “The seed has in itself a _____ principle, a principle that God Himself has _____.” (COL 63)
2. What would happen if the seed were left to itself? “. . . left to itself the seed would have no _____ to spring up.” (COL 63)
3. What is man’s part in the process of growing a crop? “Man has his part to act in promoting the growth of the grain. He must _____ and _____ the soil and _____ in the seed. He must _____ the fields.” (COL 63)
4. What is God’s role in the process of growing a crop? There is life in the seed, there is power in the soil; but unless an _____ power is exercised day and night, the seed will yield no returns. The _____ of rain must be sent to give moisture to the thirsty fields, the _____ must impart heat, electricity must be conveyed to the buried seed. The life which the Creator has implanted, He alone can _____ forth. Every seed grows, every plant develops, by the _____ of God. {COL 63}.
5. What are God’s and man’s roles in the task of growing an abundant harvest of souls? “While we are to _____ the word, we can not impart the power that will _____ the soul, and cause righteousness and _____ to spring forth. In the preaching of the word there must be the working of an agency _____ any human power. Only through the divine Spirit will the word be living and powerful to _____ the soul unto eternal life.” (COL 63)

The Power of the Seed

1. What type of power does the Word of God possess? “Being born again, not of _____ seed, but of incorruptible, by the _____ of God, which liveth and abideth for _____.” (I Pet. 1:23)
2. What assurance does God give us that His Word will accomplish its intended purpose? “For as the rain cometh down, and the _____ from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my _____: it shall not return unto me _____, but it shall _____ that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” (Isa. 55:10-11)
3. What happened when the apostles preached the Word under the power of the Holy Spirit? “And the word of God _____; and the number of the disciples _____ in

Jerusalem greatly; and a _____ company of the priests were obedient to the faith.” (Acts 6:7)

4. How is faith involved in the process of sowing the seed? “The work of the sower is a work of _____. The mystery of the germination and growth of the seed he cannot _____. But he has confidence in the _____ by which God causes vegetation to flourish.” (COL 64)
5. What happens when the farmer gives up the seed? “In casting his seed into the ground, he is apparently throwing _____ the precious grain that might furnish _____ for his family. But he is only giving up a _____ good for a larger return. He casts the seed away, expecting to gather it _____ in an abundant harvest.” (COL 65)
6. How does the life of Christ illustrate the principle in question # 5? “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of _____ fall into the ground and _____, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth _____ fruit.” (Jn. 12:24)
7. Must we expect immediate results when we cast forth the seed of truth? “The good seed may for a time lie _____ in a cold, selfish, worldly heart, giving no _____ that it has taken root; but afterward, as the Spirit of God _____ on the soul, the hidden seed _____ up, and at last bears fruit to the glory of God.” (COL 65)
8. Should we be discouraged when the seed of truth does not produce immediate results? “In our lifework we know not which shall _____, this or that. This is not a question for us to _____. We are to do our work, and leave the _____ with God.” (COL 65)

The Indispensability of Growth

1. What is represented by the germination and growth of the plant? “The germination of the seed represents the _____ of spiritual life, and the development of the plant is a beautiful figure of Christian _____.” (COL 65)
2. How vital is growth to the plant? “As in nature, so in grace, there can be no _____ without growth. The plant must either grow or _____.” (COL 65)
3. What parallel exists between the growth of the plant and growth in the Christian life? “As its [the seed’s] growth is _____ and imperceptible, but _____, so is the development of the Christian life.” (COL 65)
4. Does the Christian grow **in** perfection or **toward** perfection? “At every _____ of development our life may be _____, yet if God’s purpose for us is fulfilled, there will be _____ advancement.” (COL 65)

5. How long does it take to develop a sanctified life? “Sanctification is the work of a _____.” (COL 65)

Note: It would be well to read the following texts which corroborate Ellen White’s view of sanctification (Rom. 6:22; I Thes. 4:3-4; 5:23; I Pet. 1:2)

6. What strong words did the apostle Paul speak to the Hebrew Christians? “For when for the time ye ought to be _____, ye have need that one teach you again which be the _____ principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of _____, and not of _____ meat.” (Heb. 5:12)

Note: The Hebrews should have been teachers of the Word but instead were babies who needed to be taught the ABC’s. In the succeeding context [Heb. 6:1-6], the apostle warns the Hebrews that if they do not grow, they will spiritually die and be rejected of God!

7. How does stunted spiritual growth affect our ability to sift between truth and error? “That we henceforth be no more _____, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every _____ of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to _____.” (Eph. 4:14)

8. What did the apostle Peter encourage Christians to do? “But _____ in grace, and in the _____ of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.” (II Pet. 3:18)

The Proliferation of Christ

1. According to the apostle Paul, how does Jesus reproduce Himself in us? “But we all, with open face _____ as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are _____ into the _____ image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (II Cor. 3:18)
2. How does Ellen White describe the process whereby Christ reproduces Himself in us? “By beholding Christ, by _____ of Him, by beholding the _____ of His character we become changed. Changed from glory to glory. And what is _____? Character,--and he becomes changed from character to character. Thus we see that there is a work of _____ that goes on by beholding Jesus.” (Sons and Daughters of God, p. 337)
3. Once Christ has reproduced Himself in us, how does He reproduce Himself in others? “Christ is seeking to _____ Himself in the hearts of men; and He does this through those who believe in Him. The object of the Christian life is fruit bearing--the _____ of Christ’s character in the believer, that it may be _____ in others.” (COL 67)

Note: When Christ died on the cross, He was the solitary seed which fell into the ground and died (John 12:24). But that solitary seed soon grew and produced much fruit. That fruit, in turn,

produced ever more fruit. As the original seed reproduces itself in many more seeds, so Christ reproduces Himself ever more in those who believe in Him.

4. What does it mean to receive the Spirit of Christ? “As you receive the Spirit of Christ--the Spirit of _____ love and labor for others--you will grow and bring forth fruit. The graces of the Spirit will _____ in your character. Your faith will _____, your convictions deepen, your love be made _____. More and more you will _____ the likeness of Christ in all that is pure, noble, and lovely.” (COL 67)

A Fully Mature Generation

1. Which 19th century movement saw the greatest revival of primitive godliness since apostolic times? “Of all the great religious movements since the days of the apostles, none have been more free from human _____ and the wiles of Satan than was that of the autumn of _____.” (GC 401; read pages 400-404 for the whole picture)
2. Were the members of this religious movement ready to meet their Lord? “But the people were not yet _____ to meet their Lord. There was still a work of _____ to be accomplished for them” (GC 424-425)

Note: Ellen White then goes on to explain that the work which still needed to be accomplished was centered in the sanctuary service: “Light was to be given, directing their minds to the temple of God in heaven, and as they should by faith follow their High Priest in His ministration there, new duties would be revealed. Another message of warning and instruction was to be given to the church.” (GC 424)

3. Could Christ have come shortly after 1844? “Had Adventists, after the great disappointment in 1844, held _____ their faith and followed on _____ in the opening providence of God, proclaiming the message of the third angel and in the power of the Holy Spirit _____ it to the world, they would have seen the salvation of God, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts, the work would have been _____, and Christ would have come ere this to receive His people to their reward.” (Evangelism, p. 695)
4. Why has the second coming of Christ been so long delayed? “Christ is _____ with longing desire for the manifestation of _____ in His church. When the character of Christ shall be _____ reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.” (COL 69)
5. When the remnant church is ready to meet her Lord, what will she look like? “That he might present it to himself a _____ church, not having _____, or _____, or any such thing; but that it should be _____ and without blemish.” (Eph. 5:27)

6. How does the book of Revelation describe the end time generation which will be harvested by Christ at His coming? “And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy _____, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the _____ of the earth is _____.” (Rev. 14:15)
7. How does Ellen White describe this great outpouring of the latter rain? “_____ the final visitation of God's judgments upon the earth [the seven last plagues] there will be among the people of the Lord such a _____ of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The _____ and power of God will be _____ out upon His children.” (GC 464)
8. Will the process of sanctification of the end time generation be expedited? “Some of us have had _____ to get the truth and to advance step by step, and every step we have taken has given us strength to take the next. But now time is almost finished, and what we have been _____ learning, they [11th hour Adventists] will have to learn in a few _____. They will also have much to _____ and much to learn again.” (Early Writings., p. 67)
9. What will further happen to the faithful remnant during the time of trouble? “. . . it is needful for them to be placed in the _____ of fire; their _____ must be consumed, that the image of Christ may be _____ reflected.” (GC 621)
10. What type of character will the faithful remnant possess? “Not even by a _____ could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. . . . This is the _____ in which those must be found who shall _____ in the time of trouble.” (GC 623; read also, Revelation 14:1-5)

Saved or Lost?

1. What sad exclamation will some utter when probation closes? “The _____ is past, the summer is ended, and we are not _____.” (Jer. 8:20)
2. What assurance does God give that His people will see the fruit of their labors? “They that _____ in tears shall _____ in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with _____, bringing his sheaves with him.” (Ps. 126:5-6)
3. What great law will determine the destiny of each human being? “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man _____, that shall he also _____. For he that soweth to his _____ shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the _____ shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (Gal. 6:8-9)

