

THE PARABLE OF THE GROWING SEED. (Mark 4.26-29)



The Sower in the field by Vincent Van Gogh.

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

Jesus was a countryman. He had grown up in the countryside of Galilee. He spent much of his ministry in Galilee with people who

earned their living off the land. This is why many of his parables are about country life.

But, there is another reason. Jesus saw God at work in nature, just as he saw God at work in humans. God had made the laws for the life of nature, and laws for the life of humanity. Those laws were the same. Thus, to Jesus nature was religious. That is why a story from nature was a parable of the kingdom of God.

When the farmer has sown the seed in the earth, Jesus said, he can do nothing more. He just has to be patient and go on with his daily life while he waits for it to grow. It grows mysteriously of its own accord - "automatik" is the Greek word. It grows secretly, according to God's law for its growth.. It grows slowly - first the blade, then the ears of corn, then the grain in the ear. It's no use the farmer worrying: that won't help. Nor is there anything he can do to hasten the harvest - there are no short cuts in nature. He must have faith. He has sown the seed: harvest will come. What a person sows, that person will surely reap - that is God's law both for nature and for humankind. Then, when the happy harvest time comes, as it surely will, people may take their sickles and gather in the grain.

This parable seems to suggest that the kingdom is just like seeds. Just as seeds grow, so the kingdom does too. It may not appear to grow. It may take a long time to do so, but it does grow. And the very worst thing we can do is continually pull it up by its roots to see whether it is growing. The kingdom grows - that's what it does - we just need to let it.

The kingdom of God is just like that, Jesus said. It is like seed sown in a person's heart - the kingdom of God is within us. It grows mysteriously, secretly, slowly, automatically, according to God's law. God had been sowing the seed among his chosen people through the prophets - the last and greatest of them being John the Baptist. Now it was harvest time and Jesus was gathering it in. "The harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few," he said. He and his little band of disciples were gathering in the people of God into his kingdom.