

Introduction:

- Mark 4:26-29
- *Space: the final frontier. These are the voyages of the starship Enterprise. Its continuing mission: to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly go where no man has gone before.* If you had a pulse and a TV in the late 1960s, you probably found yourself glued to the set as you watched Star Trek and all the adventures of the Star Ship Enterprise. No doubt, you vicariously joined Capt. James T. Kirk and his crew as they “boldly” journeyed into space, the “final frontier.” You’ll note, however, their mission was not to tame that frontier, but to explore it, experience it, interact with it, learn from it. **Application:** The spiritual frontier is a lot like that “final frontier” in the sense that it is wild, mysterious, untamed, uncertain and requires an adventurous and bold spirit on the part of all those who dare to journey that way. “The spiritual life,” said Howard Macey*, “cannot be made suburban. It is always frontier and we who live in it must accept and even rejoice that it remains untamed.” Indeed, just because it is wild, mysterious, untamed ... uncertain, does not mean that it should be feared, or worse yet, avoided. Jesus said that we are to be adventurous; that we are to boldly ask, seek and knock; that we are to steer directly into the mysterious spiritual frontier that awaits us. **Oswald Chambers aptly noted:** *Naturally, we are inclined to be so mathematical and calculating that we look upon uncertainty as a bad thing. We imagine that we have to reach some end, but that is not the nature of spiritual life. The nature of spiritual life is that we are certain in our uncertainty ... Certainty is the mark of the common-sense life: gracious uncertainty is the mark of the spiritual life. To be certain of God means that we are uncertain in all our ways, we do not know what a day may bring forth. This is generally said with a sigh of sadness, it should be rather an expression of breathless expectation. We are uncertain of the next step, but we are certain of God.*
- The Kingdom - informs us immediately that we are dealing with a different realm. But our reality to bring that realm into the earth. *“Thy Kingdom come they will be done on earth as it is being done in heaven.”*
- We are to be constantly looking for the Kingdom of God. Expecting to see the Kingdom!

I. Sow Seed

- A. A seed is a simple thing. There is not much that is impressive about a seed. Ie. I am way more impressed by giant moss covered oak tree than I am of an acorn. ie. Too many Christians are like that with the word of God. They so admire the end result they never consider the seed. They are so driven to consume/have what the seed produces that they do not even consider the seed at all.
1. This is something that God wants to change in our thinking.
 2. God is moving us from placing our confidence in outward appearances which is simply faith in our carnal strength. ***Until we do this we will be highly likely to miss what God has for us. *“For we live by believing and not by seeing.”* (2 Corinthians 5:7, NLT) When we live by believing we will see the Kingdom come.
- B. Seeds are impressive to those who see with the eyes of faith.
1. A seed possess almost unlimited potential when you consider how many seeds it produces plus the continuing seed cycle!
 2. But the seed has to be sown to produce. That makes us gardeners in the Kingdom! And gardeners in our own lives. We can't forget that God watches over His Word to perform it! Jer 1:12.
 3. Sow it in others and sow it in ourselves. The seed is powerful to those who believe, foolishness to others. John 6:63; Heb 4:12; Ps 119:105

- a) Others
- b) Ourselves.

II. Sleep Well

- A. Patience is a virtue for the farmer. He knows that nothing will happen over night. ie. This is not Jack and Beanstalk. The farmer does not dig up the seed to see if it is growing.
 - 1. *“that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”* (Hebrews 6:12, NKJV)
 - 2. *“knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”* (James 1:3–4, NKJV)
- B. During the night we do not see. While the seed is covered we do not see. What does that sound like? *“For we live by believing and not by seeing.”* (2 Corinthians 5:7, NLT)
 - 1. We cant be moved by the lack of immediate fruit.
 - 2. If we do not understand the principle of patience we will become very discouraged.
 - 3. *“Patient endurance is what you need now, so that you will continue to do God’s will. Then you will receive all that he has promised.”* (Hebrews 10:36, NLT)
- C. What are we to do at night? Sleep well...REST.
 - 1. The place of faith is the place of rest.
 - 2. We rest when we are convinced of what God has said.
 - 3. We rest confidently that the seed has been sown will be fruitful. But we need patience as we endure the wait of water, cultivation and visible fruit. As we rest, (in faith) the seed begins moving! pushing though, becoming visible, bearing fruit. Even when we see fruit we still have to be patient until harvest.

III. Sickle Soon

- A. *“..., “Swing the sickle, for the time of harvest has come; the crop on earth is ripe.””* (Revelation 14:15, NLT)
 - 1. The harvest does not come until the time of full maturity, other wise both time and seed is wasted. The Gk word is *hora*, it is the set time, appointed time. You don't begin harvest until the appointed time. *Let patience have it perfect work...*
 - 2. Maturity signals harvest! Not need, not how hard we've worked, not how the farmer feels maturity determines the time. James 1:4...lacking nothing!S
- B. *“And as soon as the grain is ready, the farmer comes and harvests it with a sickle, for the harvest time has come.””* (Mark 4:29, NLT)
 - 1. We don't experience the suddenness until the process is through.
 - 2. God is looking for growth in us!
 - 3. The strange idea to us us this: The one who grows get pruned...for the purpose of being more fruitful. We have a tendency to the look at the big branch, that has posted big fruit in the past, and we expect more. But He cuts us back!
 - 4. Faith unchecked becomes entitlement. Note the difference between what we expect and what God expects. God expects growth and to prune growth. Growth is a response to the person who walks in faith and the result is we get pruned!
- C. The idea of the gradualness of the Kingdom of God is contrary to our culture concept of progress. We live in an instantaneous culture.
 - 1. Our culture values immediate results but the Kingdom is progressively unfolding! Mk 4:28 *The blade, the ear, the full kernel.*

2. Because we live in this culture we have that same expectation of God so we see Him in terms of miraculous, instantaneous and immediate.

Conclusion:

- If we are only looking for fruit we will miss far too much of what God has for us in the process.
- In fact if you continuously look for the fruit you may be discouraged much of the time.
- Instead let look for opportunities to sow the seed/Word into our lives and into the lives of others. By doing this we will assure ourselves of continual Kingdom advancement. Look for opportunity and not just deliverance. Where the land is barren sow!
- “... *those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. So let’s not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don’t give up. Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith.*” (Galatians 6:8–10, NLT)