

“Night and day, while he’s asleep or awake, the seed sprouts and grows, but he does not understand how it happens. The earth produces the crops on its own. First a leaf blade pushes through, then the heads of wheat are formed, and finally the grain ripens.” Mark 4:27-28

lectio // Mark 4:26-29

Jesus isn’t trying to explain plant taxonomy, he’s describing the mystery of God’s work verses the simplicity of the farmer’s job. Could Jesus tell a science story of how a seemingly dead, dormant seed magically comes to life once it’s planted in the ground? I guess he could. If he were lecturing on agricultural methods. Instead he focuses on a very straightforward message. The kingdom of God is like a farmer. How so? The farmer scatters the seed. Of course the farmer prepares the ground. After seeding (and watering), the mystery takes place - IT GROWS. Whether the farmer is awake or asleep, day or night - the seed grows! The seed knows what to do. The earth produces the crops on its own! Once the seed hits the earth it has its own plan, it’s own purpose and it’s own outcome already in place. The farmer doesn’t have to know how it all works, and doesn’t have to WORK to make the seed do its seed thing, it is automatic. The Apostle Paul puts it another way, some plant, some water - but God brings the harvest. “I planted the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God who made it grow. It’s not important who does the planting, or who does the watering. What’s important is that God makes the seed grow.” 1 Corinthians 3:6-7 NLT. The smart farmer tends to what they know they do well, prep, plant and water. This is where we complicate things a little, we want to figure out how to make a seed grow so we can get more! How do we “disciple?” Is there a simpler way of looking at it? Can we just focus on preparing, planting and watering a person when it comes to the seed of the gospel? Maybe we’re just not that good at figuring out the mystery of how a seemingly dead, dormant life suddenly springs to life and grows to produce? I can not force a person to grow any more than I can force a seed to grow - these are up to God! He is at work whether I sleep or am awake, day or night.

oratio

pray as responding to the words, phrase, sentence that God has stirred within you

Dad,

Why in the world do I continue to complicate the simplicity of the kingdom of God? Why do I struggle to make things happen that only you control and are responsible for? Not everyone grows. Not everyone responds to your grace. Not everyone is healed, made whole or delivered. Some stay in the pain, their sin, their circumstances. I cannot change that. I can only love, serve and sometimes speak. I can only help prepare soil, plant seed and pour some water on thirst souls. And not even all the time. Just sometimes. I want to respond to my purpose as a farmer not a seed specialist.

contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root