

THE SOWER

Small Group Study Guide | April 7, 2024

GRACE
FELLOWSHIP

Discuss: When have you shared the seed of God's Word with others? Tell about it.

Key Text: *"Again he began to teach beside the sea. And a very large crowd gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea, and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. 2 And he was teaching them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: 3 'Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow [seed].'"*
(Mark 4:1-3)

Last Sunday we began a series called "Grow (Up)" in which we're studying Jesus' parable known as "The Parable of the Sower" in Mark 4:1-20. In last week's lesson, "The Seed," we learned several introductory truths including what a parable is, why Jesus taught in parables, and why Jesus said "The Parable of the Sower" is the most important of all His parables. (For information on all this, see last week's lesson of 3/31/24.) We also learned that the seed in the parable represents God's Word, and several ways the Bible is like a seed. In today's lesson, we'll focus on the sower in the parable.

1. Sowing the seed of God's Word is a partnership with God and other believers.

In 1 Corinthians 3:6, Paul describes himself as a sower of God's Word: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth." Note that Paul describes evangelism (proclaiming the Good News of Jesus) as a partnership with other believers and God. While you may be the person who introduces the Gospel to someone and leads them to Christ all in one conversation, often a person's salvation decision is the result of a process in which we are each a link in the chain of several witnesses that leads to a person's faith-decision. One believer "plants the seed" by introducing the Gospel (v.6a), another believer "waters the seed" by providing additional information that helps the Gospel seed to take root (v.6b), and God gives "the growth" which leads to salvation (v.6c). Our goal as sowers is to faithfully share about Jesus (plant and/or water the seed)—that is, help the person get to their next step toward Him—and then leave the results to God. It is important to remember that we do the sharing, but only God can do the saving! Jesus emphasized this partnership principle when He taught about the harvest: "Others have labored...you have entered into their labor" (Jn.4:38).

Discuss: When have you seen a person's salvation (perhaps your own salvation) result from a variety of believers faithfully planting and watering the seed of God's Word in your life over time until God gave the increase?

2. Sowing the seed of God's Word requires passion.

Psalm 126:5-6 describes the passion of the believer who sows the seed of God's Word: "Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy! 6 He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him."

Discuss: How can we increase our burden for those who don't know Christ and our passion for sowing the seed of God's Word?

3. Sowing the seed of God's Word requires patience.

Just as reaping a harvest requires patience from a farmer, the sower of God's Word must be patient as he awaits the harvest of the seed he has sown. James 5:7 says, "Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains." Keep being faithful to share the Gospel and trust God with the results.

Discuss: Who has God placed on your heart to share the Gospel with?

Discuss: Why is it often difficult to be patient as we await the lost to receive Christ?

4. God wants each of us to sow His Word in the way that fits the unique persons He made each of us to be.

God wants each of us to sow His Word in a way that fits the person He made each of us to be through our unique personalities, temperaments, and talents. As we learn from examples of believers in the New Testament who shared their faith, every Gospel conversation is different, so there is not a one-size-fits all method.

Discuss: Which of the following methods best describes your approach to sowing the seed—that is, sharing God's Word with others:

- By preaching / teaching God's Word with clarity—see Acts 2:14, 40-41.
- By building relationships that point people to Christ—see Matthew 9:9-12.
- By telling your personal testimony in a relatable way—see John 4:28-30; 9:25.
- By using your intellect in a reason-giving approach—see Acts 17:2-3.
- By meeting the needs of others in practical ways—see Acts 9:36-41; Mat.5:16.
- Are there other methods of sowing the seed of God's Word you can think of that are exemplified in Scripture?

Discuss: Which of the above methods of evangelism did God use to bring you to faith in Christ?

For Further Study:

Free online study tools (commentaries, dictionaries, etc.) at blueletterbible.org

To learn more about sharing your faith effectively, come to Grace Fellowship's Foundations Class "How to Share Your Faith" on the second Sunday of any month at 11:30 am in the Chapel. To register for the class, go to gograce.church/foundations.

Contagious Faith: Discover Your Natural Style for Sharing Jesus with Others by Mark Mittelberg