

## **Sow the Word! – The Process of Manifesting Your Divine Potential**

Our focus on Sunday was Jesus' parable of the sower, the seed, and the soil – and how it provides a framework for living into our full God-given potential.

1. Before we dive into the substance of Sunday's sermon, tell us something you experienced over your Thanksgiving weekend that blessed you.
2. Read Mark 4:1-20. This parable is typically used to illustrate the different ways people respond when they hear the word of God. But on Sunday we looked at the parable through a completely different lens, as a roadmap for how we can take a "seed idea" God gives us, plant it, and nurture it until it's fully realized and bears great fruit. The process starts with a "seed idea."
  - a. In his parable, Jesus said, "The sower sows the word." Mark 4:14. This key sentence sets up everything that follows in the parable. The Greek word translated as "word" here is "logos." Logos means "conception or idea" – and is often used to refer to God's ideas as expressed in creation and through Jesus and the Scriptures. Pastor Jason pointed out there are unique creative ideas God wants to express through each of our lives. As you look within yourself, what is something – an idea or conception – that you sense God might want to bring into being through who you are and what you do? (Re-read this question, then take a minute as a group to silently meditate on what God might be saying to you, then share your thoughts.)
  - b. II Corinthians 9:10 says, "God who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness." In the context of what we're talking about today, what do you hear this verse saying?
  - c. Benjamin Franklin said, "Tall oaks from little acorns grow." Jason said, "The idea that we are the little acorns with the tall-oak-potential embedded within us is astounding; we must be planted in ground and climates that release our potential, as well as doing the work of planting the seeds of our gifts/ideas into the world so that a harvest of wholeness and beauty may result." How does it feel to think of yourself this way? Do you buy it?
3. Once you have identified a "seed idea" God has given you, like the farmer in Jesus' parable, you have to sow the seed – you have to sow the "word idea" God has given you. Jason suggested this happens through a dual inner-outer process.
  - a. We sow an idea "within" ourselves through prayer, meditation, and visualization. We live in a world so cluttered with sound and stimulus, it's hard to nurture ideas within ourselves. Let's share ideas about what works best for us. In your experience, what's the best way for you to silence all the noise of life so you can engage in meaningful prayer, meditation, or visualization?

- b. We sow an idea outside ourselves through organizing, planning, and acting. Think back to the “seed idea” you mentioned in response to Question 2.a. What is at least one concrete action you could take to further that idea?
  - c. Proverbs 12:24 says, “The hand of the diligent will rule, while the lazy will be put to forced labor.” Proverbs 10:4 says, “A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich.” Proverbs 21:5 says, “The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is **hasty** comes only to want.” What wisdom do these verses add to the process of birthing a “seed idea” that God gives us?
4. When we plant a “seed idea,” it will often move through four stages of becoming, as illustrated by the four situations Jesus describes in his parable. Each stage represents an obstacle to be overcome. Let’s think about what each stage represents.
- a. Re-read Mark 4:15. What risk to your “seed idea” is described here? How do we overcome this risk?
  - b. Re-read Mark 4:16-17. What risk to your “seed idea” is described here? How do we overcome this risk?
  - c. Re-read Mark 4:18-19. What risk to your “seed idea” is described here? How do we overcome this risk?
  - d. Re-read Mark 4:20. According to this verse, if we sow a “seed idea” God gives us and persevere through the various stages noted above, what is the end result? Harking back to the “seed idea” you mentioned in response to Question 2.a., what kind of wonderful things can you envision resulting once your “seed idea” is fully realized?
5. Jesus said, “Ask [and keep on asking] and you shall receive. Seek [and keep on seeking] and you shall find. Knock [and keep on knocking] and the door shall be opened.” (Matthew 7:7 Amplified Bible). When we encounter challenges, Jason urged us to say to ourselves, “It’s all a part of the process! Encourage yourself. It’s all a part of the process! Don’t get discouraged. It’s just part of the process!” What part of your life do you sense God applying these words to?
6. Now that we’ve thought through Jesus’ parable, go back to his words spoken right before the parable in Mark 4:11-13. What do you hear Jesus saying to you in these key verses?

***We have a WONDERFUL Christmas Program planned for Sunday December 16.  
It’s called, “Birth of a Miracle.”  
Be sure to invite a friend to share this moving experience!***