

"Resting in God"

A Parable
Mark 4:26-29

²⁶Then Jesus said, "God's kingdom is like seed thrown on a field by a man ²⁷who then goes to bed and forgets about it. The seed sprouts and grows—he has no idea how it happens. ²⁸The earth does it all without his help: first a green stem of grass, then a bud, then the ripened grain. ²⁹When the grain is fully formed, he reaps—harvest time!"

Astronaut

An American scientist back in the 1960s gave a lecture in Aeronautical Medicine. In the lecture this man claimed that measured by tasks faced in aeronautics (for example, travelling faster than the speed of sound) man is a misconception. In other words he was saying that God had made a mistake. He was saying that man was now too sensitive to be able to keep up with all the advancements mankind has made. And he may even have been implying that man is better at making things anyway.



DNA / Mobile

There just maybe some truth in that observation. Mankind does think, and in fact is convinced, that it can make anything. Just look at the technology we encounter in our world today: space crafts exploring the surface of Mars; the ability to play with DNA; instant access to information and perform tasks worldwide from our phones.



Not only do we believe that we can make anything, but we also want to make it. We seem to have to be in control of things, and we have a need to remain in control of things. That may be why there is so much activity these days. There's not many people who haven't observed that our world, and their lives are just so busy. You may have made the same comment.



Crowd

Well let me pose you a question. Are we so busy because there are so many things that we have to do? Or is the opposite true? Do we take on so much, make ourselves so busy because deep down we actually believe that we are indispensable, or at least that we have difficulty trusting others to do as good a job as we would. (We say no one is indispensable but do we really believe it of ourselves. "The next person is dispensable, but not me!")

Worried

It seems as if we have lost trust. We need to hold onto everything, have our finger in every pie, always be producing in order to feel 'right'. But all that leads to is worry and anxiety - Worry about the future, exams, our children, our job or business, our church – sometimes what we see are the threatening possibilities ahead. Have we forgotten how to rely on the fact that it is God who clothes the lilies and feeds the birds; that his kingdom comes no matter what happens. Now don't get me wrong, I'm not saying that we don't work or are not active, but I am saying that we need to get things into perspective, into balance.



We seem to have lost the ability to simply let things happen. We say 'If you want something done, do it yourself.' There are so many Strategic planning meetings going on all over our land. *[If you don't have]*

[If you don't have] a strategic plan there is the implication that something is wrong with you. Now again I want to highlight that I am not saying that strategic

planning is wrong, but have we reached the point where we must be completely in control of our future to be happy. Have we lost the ability to trust. And the consequence of that can be that we never let down or let up. We must be in control. If we're not we believe everything will collapse.

And then we read today's text.

A Farmer planted a seed and went away and when harvest time came the crop was ripe - without the farmer having to do anything else!

A famous German industrialist, as he was approaching the end of a very active working life, was asked what he would do in his retirement. He replied with one of the all-time great quotes: "I want to watch a tree grow."



The one sure thing in all the activity, in all the bewildering confusion of life, is the faithfulness and dependability of God. One day, perhaps, when we look back from heaven we shall say with amazement: "If I had only dreamed: as I stood beside the grave of my loved one; or went through that family crisis; or faced the reality of the disease that was malignant; if I had only dreamed that God was simply carrying out his design and plan then I would have been far more calm and confident. Then I would have been far more tranquil and composed.

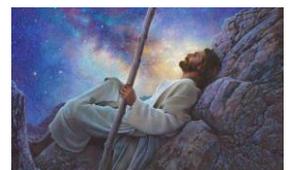
If we need an illustration of how this works out in human life, we only have to look at Jesus. Though he had the burden of the whole world on his shoulders; though he looked at the suffering in the world through the eyes of a saviour, he had time to stop and talk to individuals.



He associates with tax collectors, widows and prostitutes, he moves among the outcast of society. He appears not to be bothered by the fact that these are not strategically placed or important people. Considering that Jesus' purpose is something so great as to save the world, he appears not to care that the people he associates with are insignificant. We would be tempted to go straight to the top, to the important people, in order to get something done. We receive a tremendous lesson in the way Jesus behaves.

Because Jesus knows that he must serve his neighbour, he can confidently leave the big things to his father. We tend to take care of the big things and hope the little things will fall into place. Jesus takes care of the little things, knowing that his father is in control of the big things. He allows himself to be fitted into the plan of which his father is the master. And that's why there is that peace which radiates from Jesus to all he comes in contact with.

The other thing we notice with Jesus, is the number of times he goes off by himself to rest - to rest in his father. Humanly speaking we would say that at times Jesus makes a mistake. He has this huge crowd listening to him, and then Jesus walks away, he disappears. Just when we would have thought he should strike, he moves away. He goes off by himself to spend time with his father. For Jesus, speaking and listening to his father is vital.



The reason that Jesus spoke with such power and authority was because first he had spoken to his father. He rested with his father in prayer and meditation. And the reason Jesus could give those important hours of the day to

Tree

Jesus with people

Jesus praying

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this communion with his father was because he knew that even while he was resting, God was still working, the seed was still growing.

Luther once said: "While I drink my little glass of Wittenberg beer the Gospel runs its course." That is the truest and most comforting thing you will ever hear said about beer! God is in control of things. In our busy world today, generally we do not sin by being undutiful and doing too little work. I think we need to ask ourselves whether we are still capable of being idle - being idle in God's name. We need to ask ourselves whether we are willing to trust God, or do we have to make absolutely certain that things always happen the way WE think they should.



Do we have the capacity to slow down in our world of busyness? Can we stop and spend time with God? resting in him as our Lord did? Are we able these days to find the time to spend with God, meditating on him and on his word, or are we too busy?



When we do, we discover something very important to us. We discover just who is in control of our world. We also discover in our life just what is important and what is not, what is true and what is fake.



These days especially we need to commit our work to God and then lie down and rest in him and in his word. When we do this we find that we are doing not only the wisest thing but also the most godly - because ultimately it is not us, but God who is in control and who brings all things to completion.