

# LAMPLIGHTER

APRIL 2008

THEME: JESUS SAID...

“POWER IN THE SEED”

JOHN 20:30, 31

*"This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. {27} Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. {28} All by itself the soil produces grain--first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. {29} As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come." (Mark 4:26-29 NIV)*

Dear Fellow Gardeners,

As warmer weather approaches, we begin to get excited about being out in our gardens once again. We may attend home shows and garden shows to ignite new and creative ideas. We attend so that we may gain a greater understanding of the growing process; for in doing so we hope to reap an even more bountiful harvest of rich and delicious fruits or vegetables. Admittedly, a great deal of work and preparation takes place even before the seed is laid into the ground. No matter how much I strive to learn, I will never understand or be able to explain how that dry seed in a package becomes a beautiful, live, “fruit” bearing plant after its own kind.

So it is in the Kingdom of God. How God causes the seed of the Gospel to sprout and grow in the hearts of those within whom it is planted, we will never understand. There are times, however, when I wonder about the Words efficacy since I don’t always see the desired results of all my hard work. Like my garden, I do not always see results that I would like which can be frustrating. When these things happen, we trust and rely on the promises God gives us in His Word. Isaiah 55:10-11 says, “*As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, {11} so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.*” The promise is not the results that we desire, but the results that God desires. Those desires He will bring to pass. There continues to be power in the seed as Paul echoes in his letter to the Romans saying, (Rom 1:16 NIV) “*I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.*”

In the planting of the Gospel, we become the “garden tools” through whom God works for the good of His Kingdom. The pressure is not in the results that I bring about, but the responsibilities and results are in God’s hands. Paul affirms this thought in his first letter to the Corinthians in chapter 3 verses 6-7 “*I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. {7} So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.*” Paul acknowledges that neither Apollos nor he gets the credit, but only God who makes things grow. There is a marvelous freedom in this assurance. We remain the faithful servants who spread the seed of the Gospel and trust God to do the rest according to his plan and good purpose.

The same remains with the seed of the Gospel that was planted in our own hearts. We were the passive participants. We did not make ourselves alive, but God made us alive in Christ Jesus. In Colossians 2:13-14, we are told, “*When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, {14} having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.*”

If we come to doubt the value of what we are doing for God’s Kingdom, or if we doubt His promises in our own lives, then we must rest upon the promises of God that there is regenerating and life giving power in His Word. I encourage you – do not forget the value in preparing and planning the garden you will sow, for by praying to your Heavenly Father and studying His Word, God will equip you for every good deed.

**Close with prayer, the Lord’s Prayer, Benediction, and Song – #33 “In the Garden.”**