

## Title: “The Seed Still Works”

Chris Ryan

Matthew 13:1-9

7/12/2026

**Service Readings:** Isaiah 55:10–13; Rom. 8:12–17; Matt. 13:1–9, 18–23

*God’s Word remains powerful even when its results are not immediately visible.*

### Message:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

“Thy kingdom come.” This is what Jesus taught his disciples to pray. God, let your kingdom come. Yet, Scripture also teaches that the kingdom *has already come* in Jesus Christ. So why does Jesus still teach us to pray “Thy kingdom come”? That question has puzzled Christians for centuries. And I think the Jesus answers it in the Gospel we just heard:

<sup>3</sup>And he told them many things in parables, saying: “A sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup>And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. <sup>5</sup>Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, <sup>6</sup>but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. <sup>7</sup>Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. <sup>8</sup>Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. <sup>9</sup>He who has ears, let him hear.”

Picture this scene. Until the time of this teaching, Jesus has been openly proclaiming the arrival of God’s kingdom. Yet the responses have been mixed. Crowds have been fascinated, some have followed, but the religious leaders openly opposed him; pharisees plotted his death. And, just before this passage, Matthew records Jesus’ own family misunderstanding him. If Jesus is truly the Messiah, why are so many people rejecting him?

Jesus’ response? The kingdom is present; the Word is being preached; but not all hearers are receiving it. For some people, they hear but actively resist it. For others, they receive the Word – they truly do! But then they fall away. The author of Hebrews even warns against this when he says, “pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. Still others receive God’s Word but are distracted from worldly pleasures; they eventually lose their faith and fall away. The rest? They hear, understand, and then bear fruit. Notice that in every case the Word remains central and consistent. There is no variation on the Word that is proclaimed – the only difference is in the person who hears it. The Seed never changes. The Seed never loses its power. The Seed still works because it is God’s living and powerful Word. That is what Jesus wants his disciples to understand.

When we hear this parable, our first instinct is to usually ask which kind of soil we are. We may begin wondering how we can become the good soil. But I don’t think that is the primary question Jesus wants his disciples to ask. Remember the setting. Jesus is preaching the kingdom of God, yet many are rejecting him. The question hanging over his ministry is this: Can God’s kingdom really be advancing when so much of the seed seems to be lost?

Jesus' answer is yes. Not because every heart receives the Word but because the Seed still works. God's kingdom does not advance because every soil is good. It advances because God's Word never fails to accomplish the purpose for which God sends it.

That is comforting truth because we know what it is like to look at the world and wonder whether the kingdom is really growing. Or, perhaps as you hear Jesus tell this parable you are not thinking about the crowds at all. You are thinking about a son, a daughter, a grandchild, someone you love. Someone who has heard the Seed, yet today seems far from Christ. We know what it is like to pray for these children, grandchildren, spouses, and friends. We have faithfully planted the Seed. We have brought them to Baptism, taught them God's Word, and prayed for them. Yet there are times when it seems as though the Seed has not taken root. Jesus speaks this parable precisely for moments like these.

And so we pray, "thy kingdom come." Not because we are waiting for Christ to establish his kingdom someday - for in Jesus the kingdom has already come - but because we are asking him to keep sowing his powerful Word into a world that still resists him, into hearts that still need him, and into our own lives as well.

Even in the time of Jesus the kingdom did not look like it was flourishing. Many people rejected him. Leaders opposed him. Crowds abandoned him. Even his disciples fled when Jesus was arrested. Good Friday sure looked like the harvest failed. And later that day. Every appearance suggested failure. The crowds disappeared, his disciples fled, his enemies celebrated. The Seed was buried. If anyone had stood outside the tomb on Friday evening they would have concluded that nothing had come from this ministry. But God was already accomplishing the greatest harvest the world had ever seen. Hidden beneath the silence of the tomb, the Seed was still at work. On Easter morning it became clear that the kingdom had never stopped advancing. It had simply been hidden beneath the weakness of the cross.

And so, ultimately, this parable is not a warning about the kind of soil that we are. Instead, it is a word of comfort. God's kingdom is here and it is advancing, even when we cannot see it. The Seed still works. The Sower is still sowing today. Every sermon is another handful of seed. Every absolution is another handful of seed. Every Baptism is another handful of seed. Every Lord's Supper is Christ himself nourishing the life that his Word has already planted. The Word continues to go forth. The kingdom continues to advance. And that advance does not depend on human cooperation but on God, Himself. God sent the Seed, and the Seed continues to bear fruit. And so when we pray, "thy kingdom come" we are really praying that Jesus continue to sow in our own lives. We pray that he breaks our own hardness, that he removes the rocks and thorns in our own lives, and that he preserves our faith.

And for our children and families? We can take comfort in knowing that the kingdom comes whenever the Seed is sown. Even though much of it appears lost, even if the results appear hidden, and even if the harvest does not seem visible, the kingdom comes because Jesus is speaking. Parents and grandparents, this is why you do not lose heart. Even though much of the seed appears lost, even though years may pass without visible fruit, even though your prayers seem unanswered, the Seed still works. Christ's Word is living and active. He is still sowing. He is still calling sinners to himself. He is still able to soften hearts. And so we pray that the kingdom come, not just for ourselves, but also for our children. We take comfort in knowing that the hope for our children rests first not in our parenting, nor in their natural abilities, but in the faithfulness of the Sower and the power of his Word. And so we pray that Christ continue to do what he has promised to do in the hearts of our loved ones - that he continue to sow and that the seed continue to work against the resistance of hard hearts.

So this week when you pray, "Thy kingdom come," remember what you are asking. You are asking Christ to keep sowing. You are asking Christ to keep calling. You are asking Christ to keep forgiving. You are asking him to keep strengthening faith, gathering his harvest. Because the Seed still works.

Please pray with me.

Lord Jesus, keep sowing Your powerful Word among us. Preserve us in faith, strengthen those who are weary, and bring Your kingdom to us and to those we love through Your holy Word; for You live and reign forever and ever. Amen.