



Good Shepherd
Sermon-Based Study Guide

Mark 4: 26-29 | August 30, 2026

Prepared by Janae Barker

janae@gspc.org (562) 493-2553 x109

I. Introduction to this Study

This week, we are looking at one of Jesus' shortest parables—and the only parable found exclusively in the Gospel of Mark. Here, Jesus describes a farmer who scatters seed on the ground and then goes about his life. He sleeps. He wakes. Days pass. Meanwhile, something is happening beneath the surface. The seed sprouts and grows, even though the farmer does not understand how. The farmer can scatter the seed, but he cannot make it grow.

Jesus says this is what the Kingdom of God is like. God's Kingdom is at work in ways that are often hidden from us. We participate in what God is doing, but we do not produce the growth ourselves. Sometimes we cannot see it. Sometimes we do not understand it. Sometimes it takes far longer than we would like. Yet God's work continues.

The parable invites us to exchange control for trust. We faithfully sow what God has given us to sow, patiently wait when we cannot see what is happening, and trust that God is responsible for the growth.

II. Connecting with One Another

Where is it hardest for you to be patient when you cannot see immediate results?

Have you ever looked back on a season of your life and realized God had been working even though you couldn't see it at the time?

III. Study the Text

Let's begin by reading the whole parable and then breaking it down verse by verse. Read **Mark 4: 26-29**. Next, let's dig into verse **26**.

- At the forefront, what does Jesus say this parable is meant to teach us about?
- What is the farmer responsible for doing? What is noticeably outside of the farmer's control?

Read **Mark 4: 27**

- What is the farmer doing while the seed is growing?



- What does the phrase “he does not know how” tell us about his role in the process?
- The growth Jesus is describing is hidden, gradual, and constant. There is life beneath the surface long before there is anything visible above it. Why are we sometimes tempted to assume God isn’t working when we cannot see change?
- Think about your own spiritual life. Where can you recognize growth that happened slowly over time?
- How might this parable change the way we think about another person’s spiritual growth?

Read Mark 4: 28-29

- What does the progression of the seed teach us about how growth happens?
- Why might Jesus emphasize the process rather than jumping immediately from planting to harvest?
- What does the certainty of the harvest tell us about the Kingdom of God?

IV. Application

Where are you trying to produce something that only God can produce?

Is there a person, situation, ministry, or prayer where you have become discouraged because you are not seeing growth?

Where might you need patience because God’s work is still beneath the surface?

V. Digging Deeper

- **Psalm 90:4** How does God’s relationship to time differ from ours? How might remembering this help us when God’s work seems slow?
- **1 Corinthians 3: 5-7** Paul says, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.” How does this passage reinforce Jesus’ message?
- **Philippians 1: 6** What confidence does Paul have about the work God has begun in his people? How could this promise encourage you when someone’s spiritual growth seems slow?

VI. Prayer

- Thank God that the growth of his Kingdom ultimately depends upon his power, not ours.
- Confess the places where you have tried to control outcomes that belong to God. Pray for patience when God’s work seems hidden or slow.
- Ask God to show you where he is calling you to faithfully sow.
- Pray for people in your life in whom you long to see spiritual growth.
- Ask God to give you hope and confidence that his Kingdom is still growing and that his purposes will ultimately be accomplished.

