

Gospel Power



"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation..." (Romans 1:16)

The Gospel Power is published in interest of New Testament Christianity and to enhance the work of the Anderson church.

**Anderson
church of Christ**
5900 Highway 207
Anderson, Alabama

Visit Us On The Web

Anderson-church.org

Men Priviledged To Serve:

Sunday, November 2nd

Bible Classes

Song Leader

..... Ronnie Phillips

Bible Reading (Psalm 145)

..... Daniel Clemmons

Prayer

..... Aric Butler

Morning Worship

Song Leader

..... Ronnie Phillips

Prayer

..... Rocky Rose

Presiding Claus Martel

Serving Jimmy Glass

..... Jim Phillips

..... Curtis Mosley

Closing Prayer

..... James Word

Evening Worship

Song Leader

..... Jerry Dickey

Bible Reading (Psalm 146)

..... Mark McCrary

Prayer

..... Brian Word

Lord's Supper

..... Michael Clemmons

Closing Prayer

..... Larry White

Volume X

November 2, 2003

No. 44

The Parable of the Growing Seed

David Hartsell

The master teacher, Jesus, often presented great truths through the use of parables. Parables are stories designed to teach fundamental spiritual lessons. They are also used to conceal God's will from the closed-minded (Mark 4:11). Each person's ability to accurately interpret God's teachings is first determined by his love for God and His word. If we love unrighteous pleasure more than truth, then God will send a "strong delusion" that will deceive us and ultimately destroy us (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12). Therefore, we must always read the Lord's word with a sincere heart seeking the truth.

Jesus spoke parables about many different things: the leavening of bread, the growth of a mustard seed, a hidden treasure, a pearl of great price, a farmer planting a field, etc. Most of His parables are well known – especially to Christians. However, a few of them are less written about. One example of this is The Parable of the Growing Seed.

The parable begins with a farmer sowing his field. Seed falls into the ground and natural growth process begins. Jesus likens spiritual growth in God's Kingdom to the sprouting of the ear of grain. Does the Kingdom of God here refer to the worldwide spread of God's rule or is it discussing conversion and spiritual growth within a single human heart? The two thoughts are related but it is the later upon which we will focus. The Parable of the Growing Seed presents several lessons relating to spiritual growth and maturity.

A farmer does many things to aid in a bountiful harvest. He fertilizes and waters his field. He constantly pulls out the weeds. Yet, though he does all of this, the farmer knows that he must patiently wait for the sprouting of his crops (James 5:7). It takes time for the

growth cycle to complete itself. Similarly, spiritual growth is gradual. Some people expect too much of themselves in regard to spiritual maturity and godly accomplishments. Jesus told Nicodemus that a person must be born again to enter God's Kingdom (John 3:3). This birth comes through the imperishable Word of God (1 Peter 1:23). Every Christian, young and old, is expected by God to develop in knowledge and in the possession of fundamental Christian virtues (2 Peter 1:5-10). This requires patience with us and with other people. Christians, especially new converts, are often frustrated because of their lack of Bible knowledge and meager spiritual strength. Some older Christians are frequently impatient with the spiritual immaturity of younger, weaker brethren. Some Christians should be ashamed of their spiritual immaturity (Hebrews 5:12-14). Many, however, are simply passing through the spiritual growth cycle. People need time to consider the gospel before they obey. Our brethren need time to learn and understand God's word to properly grow up in Christ. Let us be longsuffering with every sincere person. Let us be patient with ourselves.

-via *Words of Life*; Pleasant Grove, Alabama.



“Seeker Friendly”

Jim Ward

The woman on the other end of the line asked, “Are you a seeker friendly church?” My mind raced. Should I answer “No” – would that make us seeker friendly? — or should I answer “Yes” — and would that mean that we accept all the baggage that goes with the seeker friendly or alternative seeker sensitive? Obviously, this called for a delaying tactic. I opted for, “What do you mean by seeker friendly?”

Seeker friendly comes to us indirectly from

the world of computers — playing off the phrase user friendly. Computers and the programs they run are highly complex and intimidating — so how do you get ordinary Jane and Joe to buy and use them? You hide all the complexity behind little pictures on the screen and make it so that wondrous things happen when users click a button on a little gadget called a mouse. Just so, as a generation arose which had little religious background and less Bible knowledge, churches grappled with how to reach them.

The answer? Become more user friendly, or in this case, more seeker friendly. Hide the complexity behind entertainment, drop incomprehensible Bible terms (some churches have even scrapped public Bible reading), adopt the use of skits instead of sermons (some no longer use this term), keep the sermons 10-15 minutes at most, and address only felt needs (another buzz term meaning “what the seekers feel they need”). Some seeker friendly churches seem primarily motivated by church growth. One seeker site on the Internet urges churches to ask themselves, “What could we do to market and promote our church?”

Few denominations and churches have escaped the seeker friendly controversy. At the simplest level it seems to denote nothing more than evangelism — teaching and converting people who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness. All of us are for that, right? Unfortunately, as indicated in the previous paragraph, there's more to seeker friendly than merely trying to reach the lost with the gospel (thus my use of the term baggage in the first paragraph).

That's why I am troubled to see this movement advancing into the Lord's churches. Yes, Jesus came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10), but he was not an itinerant psychologist seeking to meet people's felt needs and make them feel better about themselves, nor was He a Madison Avenue huckster trying to push a product or build a business. To Him, growth was a by-product of adding “to the church daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47). Jesus was aggressively

confrontational with the scribes and Pharisees (e.g. Matthew 23). He bucked Sadducee error on the resurrection (Matthew 22:29). If someone objects that these are not examples of seekers, then try the Samaritan woman in John 4. She was a seeker and Jesus still spoke to her pointedly. He did not compromise on her adultery — “the one whom you have is not your husband” — or her Samaritan heritage — verse 22, “You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.” Even the adulterous woman of John 8 — though often cited as an object of the compassion of Jesus — he told plainly, “Go and sin no more.” On several occasions he stopped “seekers” by telling them the demands of following him (e.g. Luke 9:57-62; 14:26-33; Mark 10:17-22). I won’t even mention in detail how John the Baptist responded to seekers (e.g. Matthew 3:1-12). And what about Paul? The poor fellow imagined that you have to convict the world of sin before you can impress them with the gospel (Romans chapters 1-3). Did he evermore need a lesson in human psychology!

Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters, if we’re not going to save people, we’re not seeker friendly. I don’t care how much better we make them feel. I don’t care if they go away from our services fairly tingling with excitement. I don’t care if they go off like a Roman candle on the fourth of July. It’s all like morphine to a terminal cancer patient — they may feel less pain, but they die anyway.

Oh yes, I sort of got away from my telephone caller and her question, didn’t I? Turns out she was fed up with seeker friendly churches and was looking for some unvarnished Bible teaching and preaching. Now there was a felt need I thought we could accommodate!

-via *The Cornerstone*; Richmond, Virginia.

Remember Our Bible Class Periods

Sunday at 9:45 a.m.
Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.

News & Notes

THE SICK: *Willie Ridgeway* is in ECM Hospital in Florence, room 178 ... *Myrtie Williams* is now at Glenwood rehabilitation in Florence, room 118-B ... *Scottie Goode* returned to the doctor on Friday... *Wanda Tucker* had a arteriogram and a stint implanted on Thursday night ... *C.L. Weathers* has not been able to be at services this week due to not feeling well ... *Sam Noles* has had the flu this past week and has not been able to be out... *Claus Martel* is still awaiting word from the tests he had done... *Taylor Mosley* has been suffering with shingles this past week, but is now doing better... *Claus Martel’s father, Gene Martel*, underwent surgery on Friday and they told him that the biopsy showed that it was not malignant... *Jean Ray* continues to be sick and is not able to be up and out ... *Hubert Goode* continues at home and is not doing well ... *Eddie Hammond’s cousin, Ricky Davis*, who has undergone treatments for his cancer ... Remember *Mattie Blanche Word* continues at home ... *Marcia Cooper’s and Brian Word’s uncle, Paul McCafferty* who is at the SunBridge Nursing Home in Lawrenceburg ... *James McConnell’s mother, Della Mae McConnell*, continues at home... *Jerry Best’s nephew, Shannon Johnson*, continues at home ... *Faye Hammond* continues at home ... *Tisha Thomas’ grandmother, Nellie Hunter*, who is in the Meadow Brook Nursing Home in Pulaski ... *Freda McConnell’s father, Alton Wray*, who is at home... *Janice Glass’ grandmother, Emma Ray*, who is staying with family.

OUT OF TOWN: *The Thomas’*: *Rickey, Tisha, Ashley and Alyssa* are in Gatlinburg this weekend ... *The Dickeys*: *Jerry, Charlotte, Justin and Brandon* have been in Gatlinburg this past week ... *Betty White* has been in Gatlinburg this past week... *Mark McIntyre* has been out of town this week with his work... *Aric Butler* is in Colorado this week due to his work... *Eddie*

Hammond has been working in Mississippi this past week...**June Calvert** returned last week from her trip out west and it was good to have her back at services ...**The Clemmons: Michael and Sissy** have been in Guntersville vacationing for a few days this past week...**Madia Haraway** has been in Illinois for her granddaughter's wedding.

NEW DIRECTORY: If you did not pick-up a copy of the new directory last week, they are on the table in the vestibule. Be sure to pick up your copy today. If any of the information needs to be corrected, please let me know.

COMMUNICATION GROUPS: Tonight is the night for communication group one to meet following our evening service. If you are in group one plan to meet this evening.

GOSPEL MEETINGS: The **West Rogersville: church** in Rogersville is beginning a meeting today and it will continue through Wednesday with services Monday through Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. **Raymond Harville** will be the speaker in this meeting ...The **New Georgia church** is beginning a meeting today and it will continue through Wednesday. They will have their service this afternoon at 3:00 p.m. with **Steve Klein** preaching. Services Monday through Wednesday will begin at 7:00 p.m. **Bob Waldron** will be the speaker...The **College Place church** in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee is beginning a meeting today and it will continue through Wednesday with services each evening at 7:00. **Ralph Walker** will be speaking... The **Jackson Heights church** in Columbia, Tennessee will begin a meeting on Friday with service Friday and Saturday at 7:00 p.m. **Ralph Walker** will be the speaker in this meeting.

THE RECORD: *Averages for October 2003*

Sunday:

Bible Classes 87
 Morning Worship 108
 Evening Worship 72

Wednesday:

Bible Classes 78

Remember Our Evening Service at 5:00.

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Bible Classes 9:45 a.m.
 Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.
 Evening Worship 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Classes 7:00 p.m.

Elders

Michael Clemmons (256) 247-0836
 Scottie Goode (931) 565-3391

Deacons

Phil Pressnell (256) 232-8509
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