

The Patient Farmer

by Duane Troyer

This sermon delves into the parable of the farmer sowing seeds from the book of Mark, highlighting the farmer's patience and trust in the growth process, drawing parallels to God's kingdom and our spiritual journey. It emphasizes the importance of patience, endurance, and hope in our Christian walk, likening it to the farmer's diligent waiting for the harvest. The message encourages believers to trust in God's timing, endure trials with hope, and cultivate patience like the farmer, ultimately reflecting God's character of long-suffering and compassion.

Scripture: Mark 4:26, James 5:7, Romans 2:6, 2 Timothy 1:12, Psalm 27:14, Galatians 6:9, Hebrews 10:36, 1 Corinthians 13:4

Topics: "Patience in Faith", "Trusting God's Timing"

Description

This sermon delves into the parable of the farmer sowing seeds from the book of Mark, highlighting the farmer's patience and trust in the growth process, drawing parallels to God's kingdom and our spiritual journey. It emphasizes the importance of patience, endurance, and hope in our Christian walk, likening it to the farmer's diligent waiting for the harvest. The message encourages believers to trust in God's timing, endure trials with hope, and cultivate patience like the farmer, ultimately reflecting God's character of long-suffering and compassion.

Transcript

I want to read a short parable this morning out of the book of Mark. If you want to turn there, it's in Mark 4, verse 26 of Mark 4. He says, and this is Jesus speaking, he says, And he was saying, The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil. And he goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts and grows.

How? He himself does not know. The soil produces crops by itself, first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head. But when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.

There's just a real short little parable that I've puzzled over quite a bit. It's not found in any of the other Gospels, and so I don't have that privilege of hearing another one that is similar, yet maybe describes it just a little different. Sometimes that helps get what Jesus means in his parables.

He's likening the kingdom of God to a farmer, and there's some things that a farmer knows, and there's a lot of things that a farmer doesn't know. The farmer knows that he wants a harvest. Of course, what's a farmer without a harvest? That's how he feeds his household, it's how he makes his income.

And the farmer knows that in order to get a harvest, he must put seed into the ground. So he knows those things. But the farmer can't make the seed, the farmer can't cause it to grow.

It grows in a manner that he doesn't understand. The combination of the warmth of the sun, the moisture of the rain, the nutrients of the soil, those things together can take this completely dormant seed, a seed that has died, and can make it produce a plant that has life. As this seed sprouts and pushes roots downward and grows a stem upward, first the blade and then the head and then the mature grain of the head, it captures energy from the sun that the farmer can't see.

It captures nutrients from the soil that the farmer can't see and converts it into a visible plant and then into a visible grain of head, head of grain. And he doesn't know how this happens. He doesn't understand even how this happens.

Much less can he make it happen. So day after night and night after day, he goes to bed, he gets up, he goes to bed, he gets up, and from day to day, he can barely even see that anything happened. But he just patiently waits and waits and waits and waits until finally the grain in this head is mature and he gets down the sickle and he thrusts in the sickle and he harvests.

And as he fills his garner with grain, there's some things that he knew and knows and understands and there is a lot that he doesn't. He knew that sowing seed would set into motion a spontaneous process that would lead to harvest and he knew that he wanted to harvest. But how that bag of seed turned into a bin of grain, he doesn't know.

Now, Jesus is likening this to the kingdom of God and I've puzzled over this parable wondering if Jesus is referring to the man casting seed like Jesus gave other parables of a sower and a seed and of wheat and tares and in a lot of these parables, his sower is the son of God or the Lord himself, casting seed. And we're the soil, right? And on what soil this seed falls depends on how it produces. And so I've wondered, is he saying the same thing again? There's a part, is God this farmer? And there's a part that he does.

There's a part that he doesn't do. And he wants to harvest and once the time is right, once the maturity that he's looking for is there, he'll put in the sickle and he'll harvest. Maybe Jesus is even referred to as seed.

This could be a parable of Jesus, the seed coming down to earth, which set into motion something that will then result in the fullness of the kingdom of God. It could be that. The part about the farmer not really knowing how things work maybe doesn't quite fit in so well.

I don't think there's too many things that God doesn't understand how it works. Or is this parable different? Is this parable talking about the farmer being us? Are we the one casting seed? And the more I wondered about it, the more I thought, well, what difference does it make? Isn't the whole purpose of revealing God's character and his nature for us to be like that? Isn't the purpose that we read the scriptures and that we pray and that we came together today? The whole purpose behind us being a Christian, is it not to be like him? And if we can get something out of scriptures that reveal God's nature and God's character, then it's for us, too. We want to be like that.

And I think that the main purpose in this parable is God wanting us, or expressing for himself and wanting us to have the right attitude toward the kingdom and toward the harvest, and that is patience. It'll come in God's time, and we are in need of patience, Paul says, that after we have done the will of God, we might receive the promise. See, we can do the will of God, but we wait for the promise, just like the farmer sows the seed and then he waits and waits and waits for the harvest.

Patience, and this is important, patience is not this careless, kicking back, doing nothing as we just let time fly by. That's not what patience means. Patience is endurance.

Patience is long-suffering. Patience is hanging in there. The farmer doesn't just sleep from spring till fall, not at all.

He cultivates, he irrigates, he perspires, he does what is in his power to do till the harvest comes. As limited as that might be, as limited as what is in his power to do might be, he still does what he can do. He does what's in his power to do as he anticipates and waits and does what it takes to get that harvest.

Paul says, patience works experience, and experience hope, and hope makes not ashamed. I want you to think about that for a little bit. Patience, if we have patience, we can have hope.

And if we have hope, we can be patient. If we lose our patience, it means we've lost our hope. If we lose our hope, we lose our patience.

These things really go together. We are in need of this patience, and patience ends up producing hope. And because of hope, we can just hang in there just a little longer.

Recently, I read a very interesting thing. I thought it was very interesting. It said during a study at Harvard in the 1950s, Dr. Kurt Richard, he did an experiment with rats.

He took domesticated rats and wild rats, and they were the same breed of rats, but some of them were domesticated, some of them were wild, and he put them in water to see how long they could swim until they die and drown. Whether he should have done that or not, that's beside the point. This was done, and here's the results of this experiment, is that the domesticated rats could swim for 40 to 60 hours before they couldn't make it any longer and drown.

The wild rats swam for 15 minutes. They gave up and died. Now here's the really striking part.

When the wild rat, just at 15 minutes or just before it just gave up out of exhaustion and died, if they took it out of the water, held it for a little while, and petted it dry, and put it back into the water, it could swim for 40 to 60 hours. Whenever there's a little bit of hope, you can hang in there, right? When there's a hope that this might end, that there might be an end to this, we can endure, we can persist, we can persevere. We need patience.

We need patience like God has patience. Think about God's patience. We see it all through scripture, his patience, his endurance with people who just continue to not get it.

We need patience with our spouse. We need patience with our children. We need patience with our brethren.

If we want that genuine fruit, that mature fruit, we're going to have to be patient. We are limited in our ability to just make that happen. There's some things we can do, but there's just a lot that we can't do to

produce the real genuine fruit, the real genuine mature grain, head of grain.

Many times, people know what's wrong. We know what's wrong with our spouse sometimes. We know what's wrong with our teenagers.

We know what's wrong with our brethren. It's evident. It's evident in their clothes.

It's evident in their cars. It's evident in their bookshelves. It's evident in all the things, all the ways they express whatever, a world in us, a rebellion of, we know it.

We can see it. It's pretty common for people and for churches to just decide to take action and decide, we're going to fix this. We're going to fix these bad results, and we're going to, through force or some ungodly manipulation or bribery or whatever, we're going to change this outside form, and we're going to make this person into something that he's not, and it doesn't produce the real thing that we want.

It produces a synthetic fruit, and there's all kinds of ways to make synthetic fruit. We can have, we can just have one man just make decisions, call the shots. We can have every man lean on his own understanding.

We can vote. We can take majority rules. We can take all these things, but God is wanting us to patiently bear with each other.

Of course, there's some things not permissible. Of course, there's some things not tolerable. That's why Paul says, as much as possible, live peaceably with all men.

He knows that it's not always possible, but still, that's God. That's the way God's nature is. That's the way he waits with us, and we ought to be the same way.

Recently I read that the National Geographic does not sponsor a trek or a journey if the people going on this trek or journey, if there's an even number of people, they won't sponsor it. Why? Because what if there's two people? There's got to be three, five, seven, nine, whatever. What if two people are doing some kind of a trek, and they come to a disagreement on how to cross this mountain, and it can't be resolved because there are two different opinions? They need that third person for the odd man to yield.

It's probably why the Supreme Court needs an odd amount of people on it, because that's how they vote. That's how they resolve things. But the interesting thing is, how did Jesus send out people? Two by two.

See Jesus is looking for something different. He's not just looking for movement. He's not just looking for... Some people mistake movement for progress.

And sometimes the real thing that God is wanting us to learn is something other than just getting across the mountain. He's also wanting us to learn to bear, and to be patient, and to hang in there, and to suffer long. Sometimes the genuine progress, the real true progress, looks more like that plant that grows day after night after day after night, very slowly.

But it's the genuine thing, and what we really need to get that fruit is patience. There's some laws of sowing and reaping that we can never get out of. We will reap what we sow.

We will reap later than we sow, and we will reap more than we sow. Let me just close with reading a few verses in James, verses 7 to 11. Therefore, be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord.

The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and the late rains. You too, be patient, strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged.

Behold, the judge is standing right at the door. As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. We count those blessed who endured.

You have heard of the endurance of Job, and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful. The Lord add His blessing. Open it up for comments or corrections, if you have any.

You may have already read this, but I got here a little late, but this... Oh, I got my little girl right here, patient continuant, so it's a precious concept to me. I'm just going to read in Romans 2. God, who will render to every man according to his deeds, to them who by patient continuance and well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life, but unto them that are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil. It's like the contrast, that that's the opposite of patiently continuing, is being contentious and not obeying the truth and obeying unrighteousness.

And then I just thought, Brett knows Greek, but I just, this might not be the best, but I just click, when I click on that, it's just one word, patient continuance there. Hupomone, hupomone, something like that. It says steadfastness, constancy, endurance.

In the New Testament, the characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings. And then down at the bottom, I like it says, it says cheerful or hopeful endurance. I don't want to sound like a broken record, but I probably will.

I've made mention of that testimony about the boat, the Endurance. Has anybody actually read that? Shackleton and the Endurance, they went to, they sailed to the Antarctic. They were going to be like the first guys to make it to the Antarctic.

And the boat was named Endurance. It's, I mean, it's, I think it's in the National Geographic, but, too, but it's just an amazing story. I would encourage you all to maybe look into it, but something that you shared about the hope.

So this boat, the Endurance, it tried to break some record and make it to the Antarctic and it got frozen in the ice. And they were stuck in the ice for two years. And it's just this amazing story of just enduring.

But one of the things that the captain did is he realized that in order for them to survive, their morale had to be high. They couldn't lose hope. If they lost hope, they were going to, it was going to be, that was going to be the end of them.

So they would have like community haircuts and they would put on plays for each other and they would just try to really stay motivated. And there's all these things that took place in the story that are really amazing. This guy Shackleton, he really knew how to be a leader.

But they had eventually, just to make a long story short, they had sailed the boat to an island. They were like halfway to being rescued, but the waters were so dangerous that they couldn't all go. So just the toughest of the toughest guys got in this boat and they just, it took like this shot in the dark to survive.

But the guys that stayed back, the one guy would tell, he would say every morning to the guys that stayed back, he would say, pack up your gear, today the boss is coming. And every day they would pack up their gear in hopes that he was going to return to save them. You know, the little boat that went to get help.

And it had been a while, but finally one day, you know, every day they had packed up their gear waiting for the boss, but then one day they packed up their gear and the boss actually came. It's an amazing story though, just what these guys endured and how they kept their hopes up. I mean it's a worldly story, it's a worldly testimony, but you can just easily switch it over to being Christians.

Anyways, I really appreciated that. Thank you. Hey Brother Duane, thank you so much.

That was a really good message. Yeah, I was just sitting there thinking, remembering in years past when I went through this writing that Tertullian did, where it's basically on patience. And how he makes the connection, which I never did before, to temperance or self-control.

And I just think he does a really amazing job making that connection. And then seeing that connection to the suppression of the flesh, the taking up the cross daily. It's all connected to this idea of patience.

Because it's only through that that we can walk with the Spirit, which leads into the Kingdom. So I just thought I'd share that. But yeah, thank you Brother.

Maybe just a question for you Duane. The rat study, is it because the domesticated rats felt loved? Did it say in the study? No, if I just had to make a guess, I would have thought the wild rats were probably killing each other longer than the other ones. But I guess I had this feeling because humans were doing it, that the domesticated rats had some hope that these humans would save them.

Or that there's hope somehow. They've been fed by these humans. They've been taken care of by these humans.

They've been held before. It didn't say in the study? No, it didn't. Not in the one that I saw.

That's what I was talking about, the wild rats. You would think a wild animal is often more hardy and tough and used to danger and all that. But the whole study, the point of the study was that the amount of endurance we have is a psychological thing.

That's what they were saying. They were saying rats are thought to be self-sufficient and that's what the rats were thinking about. Yeah, like you said, it's psychological.

It's probably why Paul said it. It set your mind on things. Yeah, I think he'd be like, maybe even if the wild rat knew he could swim longer, why bother? He's figured out this is a hopeless situation.

They pulled him out and they taught him. Sometimes people pull you out of the water like, oh maybe that'll happen again. Yeah, it was encouraging to me as well.

Thank you for it and amen. I even got a different thought about the rats. I think the wild rat was more aggressive and he just tired himself out immediately and he's going to drown.

And when he got the relaxation, he was put back in and he relaxed. That's my idea about that. I don't think they psychologically figured that out.

But humans will do that. I don't think rats will. I think the common rats, they just floated around and they took it easy.

This is why when you get caught in water, if you panic, you're going to die in 15 minutes using that same story. Or if you relax and go along with it, you can make it a lot longer. I think it had to do with panic.

Anyways, that's an interesting story. Whatever the reason. Neither am I persuaded that rats have hope.

Maybe they do. But I agree with the fact in humans, it's that way when we have hope. Another thought I had about that whole business, isn't it not often that God tests us to our limits? It's not really a test.

He tests us to our limits. And how often is it when we surrender or at the time we think it's the end and then God... I'm not sure I'm saying the right thing here. He has to take us to our limits to be a good test.

I'm not sure how that comes with the hope. It kind of confused me just a little bit based on some future past thoughts I had. Anyways, it was encouraging.

God bless us. I appreciated what you shared. I'll just share my thoughts about the rats.

When you started talking about the experiment, my first guess was that the domesticated rats survived longer. I don't know if this... The way I thought about it in my mind, as you were saying, was that these domesticated rats believed in a higher power. They were used to being taken care of by someone else.

They didn't live and die by themselves the way the wild rats would have. I just thought that would be the reason, maybe one of the reasons why they'd have had not been... whatever you want to call it, why they would have had hope or at least continued swimming longer. That was my thought.

This request
But with your sweet spirit Lord let us be blessed
Open the windows And pour out all the blessing
Shower your power Upon us we pray
Send such a blessing We cannot contain it
Lord open the windows Of heaven today
There's so many living In darkness and sin
They know not the Savior And no peace within
But we know you're not living That any should die
But all come repenting For this we do cry
Open the windows And pour out all the blessing
Shower your power Upon us we pray
Send such a blessing We cannot contain it
Lord open the windows Of heaven today
Sometimes I am weary And heavy and worn
I'm crushed by the canter And bleeding and torn
Then I go back to Jesus With tears on my face
And cry out for mercy His love and his grace
Open the windows And pour out all the blessing
Shower your power Upon us we pray
Send such a blessing We cannot contain it
Lord open the windows Of heaven today
So often within us Your power so strong
But yesterday's blessings Are all past and gone
Once again each stand meeting
As humbly we pray And that's why we lift up
Our voices to say Open the windows And
pour out all the blessing Shower your power
Upon us we pray Send such a blessing We cannot contain it
Lord open the windows Of heaven today
For the beauty of the earth For the beauty of the skies
For the love which from our birth Over and around us lies
Christ our God to thee we raise This our faithful, grateful
praise For the joy of human love Brother, sister, parent, child
Friends on earth and friends above For all gentle thoughts
and mild Christ our God to thee we raise This our hymn of grateful
praise For Christ's church that evermore Lift the holy hands
above Offering up on every shore This pure sacrifice of love
Christ our God to thee we raise This our hymn of grateful praise
For thyself as gift divine To our grace so freely given
For the great, great love of God Peace on earth and joy in heaven
Christ our God to thee we raise This our hymn of grateful praise
God's kingdom descend thee As souls find liberty Of thee we sing
For this our savior died Men here renounce their pride
To heed the gruesome cry The praises scream On

ancient hymns of thee Lord, for thy calvary Thy name we love We love thy perfect will Thy laws we will fulfill Through faith and hope until We meet again Let God's holy preach Ring forth and swell the breeze O'er hill and plain Let mortal souls awake And love and sin forsake In order to partake In Jesus' praise O Father, hail to thee Through all eternity To thee we sing Let all the saints unite To walk the path of life Placed by the bleeding Christ The King of kings I know not why But wondrous grace to thee He hath made known Nor why unworthy Christ, dear God Redeemed me for his own But I know by a believer And am persuaded That he is able To keep the heart which I committed Unto him against that day I know not how This saving grace to me He did impart Nor how believing in his word Brought peace within my heart But I know by a believer And am persuaded That he is able To keep the heart which I committed Unto him against that day I know not how The Spirit moves convincing men of sin Revealing Jesus through the Word Creating faith in him But I know by a believer And am persuaded That he is able To keep the heart which I committed Unto him against that day I know not what a good or ill May be reserved for me Of weary ways or golden days Before this face I see But I know by a believer And am persuaded That he is able To keep the heart which I committed Unto him against that day I know not when my Lord may come At night or new day fair Nor if I'll walk the hill with him Or meet him in the air But I know by a believer And am persuaded That he is able To keep the heart which I committed Unto him against that day

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/2Vno033cloM.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/duane-troyer/the-patient-farmer/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net