

Miracle of Life

by Thaddeus Barnum

The sermon emphasizes the supernatural power of God that brings life and growth to our souls, beyond our control or ability, and the importance of depending on God's miracle of life in our spiritual journey.

Duration: 31:14

Scripture: Mark 4:26

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the parable of the farmer scattering seed from Mark 4:26-29. The farmer represents believers who sow the seed of the word of God. The speaker emphasizes that while believers can do their part in sowing the seed, the growth and transformation that happens is ultimately a miracle of God. The speaker also warns against placing too much importance on politics and instead encourages believers to focus on the kingdom of God and spreading the word of God to bring life to the world.

Transcript

Father in heaven, we thank you and praise you for this day. And we thank you that we are utterly and completely dependent upon you and the gift you've given us in your Son Jesus Christ. And so we pray by the ministry, the grace of your Holy Spirit, that you'd open your word to us.

Whatever state we find ourselves this morning, that you would give our attention to you. And so minister life to us, we ask. For we pray it in the name of your beloved Son, our Savior Jesus.

We ask it in his name. Amen. Good morning.

I would love it if you would turn into your Bibles to Mark and chapter 4 and look at these four verses with me. Verses 26 to 29. It is the only time we find these verses in the Bible.

This parable is unique to Mark. And I'm sure you realize, perhaps, if you've had any time in the gospel reading, that a parable is a gift for us. It is a natural, physical way to see life around us and see its comparison to the kingdom of God.

And that's what Jesus does here. He's giving us a natural, a physical principle that we all know, so that you and I might catch a glimpse of the kingdom of God. And so we begin this story.

It is so brief. And I say it that way because we see a farmer, a man, who is out to scatter seed. We don't know anything about the preparations of the soil.

We know nothing about what he did during the days that he tended his field. All we know is he scattered the seed upon the ground, and he went to bed, and he got up. And he went to bed, and he got up.

Time started to pass. And what happens is that this seed sprouts and grows. And these words, these four words, mean so much to me.

He knows not how. He knows not how. He's admitting there's something we can do, but there's something we can't do.

We know not how. This miracle of life happens. So beyond our control, this miracle of life takes place.

Oh, we do all the right things, but no, no. We're dependent upon this miracle of life. It sprouts.

It grows. And boom, it becomes a blade, and then an ear, and then the grain in the ear, and then the grain matures to ripen, and then we harvest, and then we make bread. And bread is a miracle.

Life has come upon it. Life that was beyond our ability to make it happen. God did it.

And that's precisely how Paul says it in 1 Corinthians 3. I plant Apollos waters. God gives the growth. God gives the growth.

It's a miracle of life. Jesus said it this way in John chapter 12. He said, truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone.

But if it dies, it bears much fruit. If it dies, it bears much fruit. And I want to say, wait, wait.

Oh, no. If it dies, it dies. But you see, when it dies, the miracle of life comes, and the miracle of life makes it live.

It's the principles, the mysteries, the miracles that you and I live in every day of life. And the greatest danger we have is that we come to take it for granted, that we expect it, that we're entitled to it, that if it doesn't happen, we get upset, maybe even upset at God. And there's hardly an admission.

We often don't say this. There's a part I can do. There's only a part God can do.

But isn't that the way life is, this mystery, this miracle of life? Isn't the way everything is? Does it surprise you, dear friends, that the earth is where the earth is? That we're not too far from the sun so that we get frozen. We're not too close to the sun that we burn up. No, no.

We're at just the perfect place. And then, I understand that we tilt a bit during the course of the year. Seasons come and seasons go.

Rains come. Rains hit the earth. The seed goes into the earth, and this miracle of life happens.

It's, it's, how does it? I don't know. He knows not how. It's the same thing with our children, isn't it? We suddenly find conception.

How does it happen? He knows not how. And into the womb, this person begins to get formed. It's Psalm 139 that will teach us that we're knitted together in the womb, fearfully and wonderfully made, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

And the psalmist cries out, this knowledge is unsearchable. It's too wonderful for me. It's a miracle.

It's a mystery. And then out comes that baby, and we hold the baby in our hands, and we feed the child milk, and we sleep, and we rise, and we rise, and we sleep, and that little rugrat grows. It grows.

How does it happen? He knows not how. It's the miracle of life. And that little one, boom, it's got its own fingerprints unique to itself.

And then we begin to see this little person begin to emerge, mind, heart, and soul unique. Person begin to emerge. How is that possible? He knows not how.

The child begins to develop, and the child begins to mature. And all our days, you and I are dependent on the miracle of life to live. If it's extracted from us, we die.

But we have it, and it's a miracle of it. And that's what the Lord Jesus is pointing to us in this parable. He wants us to know the miracle of life.

Can you see it? Can you see it when you have a piece of bread in your hand? Can you see it when you hold a baby? Baby in your hands, can you see the miracle of life? It's only the fool in the heart that says there's no God. It's only the fool in the heart that can't stare into the miracle and see what God only can do. But Jesus invites us in to that vision of the miracle of life that we live with every day.

And he says, now, you and I, we have a glimpse into the kingdom of God. It is all about the miracle of life. It's all about, it's about this, not this physical life, but about eternal life coming into the soul.

And suddenly, we get on a new platform. We're looking at the miracle of life from the kingdom of God's perspective. We don't have much to interpret because prior to this parable, we had the parable of the sower.

And in it, we learned Jesus taught us in the interpretation that the seed is the Word of God, or the seed is the Word of the kingdom of God. And that seed, it comes into the, and not into the soil, but into the heart. And it's meant to have the miracle of life touch it.

And suddenly, we are to come to life by that indestructible, abiding, living Word of God. How does it happen? We do not know. The farmer is the one who has the seed, and sows it, and scatters it.

And maybe there's things that you and I have done down the course of our life, where we have turned our lives to the Lord. We have prayed. We have done what we've been taught to do to repent of our sin, to receive Christ into our life.

But we've done all the right things, and something's not there. We've done all the right things, and this miracle hasn't happened. And we don't know why, so we keep trying.

We don't know, until one day. And if you're a Christian, you know that you woke up one day and realized the miracle of life had come to you. That the Lord had birthed something inside of you, a sign of life, that Christ came into your life.

And you don't know it. You don't know how it happened, but suddenly you rise up and you say, I'm a Christian. I know what it means.

I can actually say the words, I'm born of God. And so we hear the words that Jesus said, or John recorded, as many as received Jesus, to them he gave the right to become children of God. To them he gave the power to become children of God.

The miracle touches the heart. And that's why, that's why the only thing we can do is sing the song that's the most popular, one of all, Amazing Grace. How sweet the sound, it saved a wretch like me.

What does that mean? It means it wasn't of my doing. There were things I could do, but the day came when I realized that grace had come to me, and my heart awakened. That seed came into my heart, and it burst into life.

Burst not just into physical life, burst into the life of God, the eternal life that's given to us from above. So that we can say we're not born of blood, nor the will of the flesh, nor the will of man, but we're born of God. How does it happen? He knows not how.

And so I was talking to a pastor not long ago, coming up to Father's Day, and he's just hurting, because he and his wife have two children, a son and a daughter, and they were both raised in a home where that imperishable seed was given to them. They knew the living and abiding Word of God, and it lit upon the daughter, and she came to life in Christ, but it did not light upon the Son. And the moment he got out of the house, he went and is living this day his own way, renouncing the Christian faith, plunged into the present culture.

And of course the parents turned back, and they say, what did I do wrong? What more could we have done? And all I can say is this, it's a miracle, it's a mystery. We don't know these things, but our prayers for that boy never stop. Until one day that miracle of life lights upon your son, we never stop.

It's not just what we do, it's the miracle of what God does in the interaction with the heart. It's a mystery, it's a miracle. Let me give you some depth to it a little bit when you go to 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 23, because Peter talks about this.

Peter identifies in verse 23 of his first epistle and first chapter, he said, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable through the living and abiding word of God. For all flesh is like grass, all its glory like the flower of the grass. The grass withers, the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever.

And this is the word that we preach to you, not the perishable seed, but the imperishable seed that gets into the heart that gives us eternal life. Not the decay of the flesh, but the imperishable nature of the gift that's given that we belong to the kingdom, and we belong to Jesus, and we belong to eternal life. And so what Peter does for us, is he separates the perishable word from the imperishable word.

And that is to say that the imperishable word is the word that comes to us that has got no miracle life power in it. It's been stripped of it. It is the perishable word.

And I would like to describe it, if you don't mind, very simply this morning, is that any time the devil gets the Bible in his hand, he does not know how to preach the imperishable word. No, no, he preaches the perishable word. He wants to keep us from the Scriptures, from the living and abiding Word of God, which

is why one of his first jobs is to keep everybody ignorant of the Scriptures, ignorant of the Spirit of God bringing the Word of God alive to the heart of the people of God.

Keep us ignorant. And he's doing a wonderful job. The second thing he does, he's done from the beginning.

You can find this early on in Genesis chapter 3. He questions the Bible. He takes out his Bible and he says, now did God really say this? If you remember the story in the Garden of Eden, Eve says, we should not eat of the tree. If we eat of that tree, that particular tree will die.

And immediately the devil says, disguised, I might add, the disguised devil says, no, no, you shall not die. He's always done this. He's confused us.

He's distorted the Scriptures to us. He's turned the imperishable into the perishable. So that sometimes even Christians can't make a distinction.

We hear the Scriptures preached and think we're hearing the imperishable Word, but in fact, it's only meant to touch this present life. It's not the imperishable Word. There's a distinction.

What do I mean by that? Well, I mean, Paul says it this way. The time will come when we will not endure sound doctrine, but wanting to have our ears tickled, we're going to accumulate for ourselves teachers in accordance to our own lusts and passions. What does that mean? It means the perishable seed, always appealing to the lusts of the day.

And that kind of preaching is everywhere. It's everywhere. I was stunned to grow up in the denomination I grew up in and find people of great, great repute, scholars and academics, people with great oratory skill, rise to the pulpit and not give us the imperishable seed of Jesus and not tell us the wonders of the gospel.

No, no. They decided to out Jesus and put in a message of love, just simply general love, a message of social justice, wonderful message. I call them homarchian messages, wonderful, tender, sensitive, sentimental, that great philosopher, homarchian, you've heard of him? And the people, oh, they're so pleased, and especially at the orators and entertaining, a wonderful people, a convincing person.

You cannot hear. You cannot hear. It's not here.

You're giving us something that doesn't feed the soul. You've got to give us something tangible, something real that actually cares for the well-being of the soul. Where is it? The third thing that the devil does, and I can only say this, and I'll say it quite quickly in passing.

For those who do know the Lord, who have been changed by Him and are born again, who become pastors and Christians in wonderful churches, somehow the devil gets in and begins to disturb us and take us off message. We begin to argue with each other. He takes us off message so that we stop hearing the gospel.

We hear the other messages, and these pastors, these Christians, they lose their first love for Jesus. I don't know how it happens, but that's what the devil does. The other day I was listening to the news, and this preacher was being interviewed.

He got up. He said he's a wonderful gospel man, and he said these words. I couldn't believe my ears.

The entire gospel, the saving of our country in America depends on the midterm elections. We've gone mad. We're starting to sup on the ivy of the culture and not the ivy, the kingdom of God that comes to give us life.

Don't you dare bring politics. You can bring morality here, but you don't bring politics here. Why? Because we're starving for the Word of God to be given us by the Spirit of God that feeds the soul and gives us life.

That you and I might rise from where we are and go be farmers in the field and sow the seed that can actually bring life to the world around us. Kingdoms come and kingdoms fall, but this kingdom, it lasts forever. Not bend our knees to the politics of our time.

We shall not become one of these rabid people that say everything depends on the morality of our country and who's elected. Be free to be in politics. I have no care about that, but it doesn't don the pulpit, nor is it the heart of a gospel that can save us.

No, no. We've been given the imperishable seed. We've been given the wonder and the joy of a gospel.

Well, what is that imperishable seed? Let me take you to 1 Corinthians chapter 1 verse, no, 1 Corinthians chapter 2 verse 2. I do this because the apostle Paul, he is everything that we admire in our culture today. He's brilliant. His academics, his career, his secular understanding, he's a scholar.

And how we prize academics in the scholarships today. And he knows the Scriptures inside and out. He's breathed them all his days.

But most of all, he's come to this wonderful knowledge of Jesus on the road to Damascus and had revelations of glory. Yes, yes. With all that he knows, the vastness of everything he knows.

Listen to what he says in 2 2, 1 Corinthians 2 2. But I, no, no, I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I've not come to you in lofty speech and in lofty wisdom and the wisdom of men. I've come to give you Christ.

I've come to give you the gospel of Jesus as it's found in the cross of Christ. Just as he said in verse 18 of the first chapter, for the word of the cross is to us who are perishing foolishness but to us who are being saved. The cross has the power of God to save us.

It's why Paul would say, God forbid, I should boast. Galatians 6 14. God forbid, I should boast.

Save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by which the world is crucified to me and I to the world. Why did he say it that way? I'll tell you why. I don't know the mysteries behind it.

I don't. But I know what the Bible tells me. The Bible tells me in Isaiah 53 that when you come to the cross of Jesus, Isaiah 53 6 says that the Father laid upon the Son the iniquity of us all.

That there's a transaction that happens. It's a literal physical transaction that happens. It's lifted off of us and it's placed upon the Son, the beloved Son upon Calvary who knew no sin but became sin on our behalf.

Did you all get that sort of kind of? Do you understand that what happens here when the living and abiding word of God comes, we might understand that with our minds but the day comes that we understand it with our soul. He's not just talking about the iniquity of us all. He's talking personally.

It's the iniquity of me. The day comes and you realize that the shame I've borne, the burden I've borne, the rebellion I've borne, the guilt I've borne, all the sins that's been woven into the nature of who I am, it's transacted off of me onto the Son back 2,000 years. How is that possible? I don't know.

He knows not how. I don't know. But I know that one day this is what happens when the Lord begins to work.

That transaction takes place and you know it. You cannot be born again and born of God and not know it. You know it.

Something's happened to you. You're forgiven. You're clean.

You're made new. The miracle of life, it's come upon you and something inside of you begins to sing. You know that spark of life, the sprout has begun to grow.

The blade is coming. The ear, the full grain in the ear, the ripeness dependent on the miracle of life all our days, all our days, so that we can actually say as Paul stated, I have been crucified with Christ. He took my sin off of me.

He took it to himself. He died for me. He paid the price for me.

No longer do I do it. And so I am crucified with Christ because his death is my death and my death that I deserved. He's done it for me.

That transaction happens. I am crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live.

And then comes the miracle surprise. Christ lives in me. Christ lives in me.

And the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God. He loved me. He delivered himself up for me.

Look what he's done. It's Jesus. It's him crucified.

That's the message that gives life to us. That's the imperishable seed that comes to the heart that the Spirit of God uses. And you don't know how you hear it.

You go, yes, but it's the time when you suddenly realize, I know it for myself. I know this for myself. And that second transaction, that Easter breath of the Holy Spirit that comes into our bodies.

And the love of God is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he's given to us. And we come to life. We come to life in Jesus.

How does it happen? He knows not how. But it happens. And that life is meant to be something that we live on every day, all our days, all our days, as long as we have breath, when we become a little blade, when we become that little shoot, that blade, when we become the ear, when we become the full grain in the ear, all our days, until we've run our entire course.

We are dependent upon the miracle of life, the living and abiding Word of God, by the Spirit being applied. What does the devil do? He comes even to us who are born again, and he begins to stunt our growth, get us attracted to things outside. He begins to deaden the soul.

Oh, I cannot tell you how frustrating. You see how old I am. I've been in a place where I've watched these young people come to faith in Jesus, and then we throw them to seminary.

Wrong seminary. And they got feasted on the perishable seed. How lovely of us.

And they come out just deer in the headlights. What's missing? They stole the life of them. Somebody's got to get them in a hospital, make them well again, revive the soul again.

And that happens to so many people, so many churches that come to life, and then the devil comes and breaks us apart and hurts us and crushes us. No, no, we're to feed on the living Word of God all our days and never stop the hunger, never stop the Spirit of God making it life to us. Are you dulled by this? Are you dulled by it? It's a sure indication something's wrong with you, wrong with me.

No, no, we need this miracle of life every day. And here's the story. I love this part of it.

Here's the story. Here's the story. One of us, all of us, are one day we are going to die.

One day this body that's old and decayed and mortal and perishable is going to go down into the dust. And I run to the Scriptures and I say, what then? What then? And the miracle of life begins to shine through these pages. Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord Jesus Christ by the power that enables Him to bring everything under His control, Philippians 3, 20, 21, will transform our lowly bodies to be like His glorious body.

In a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised imperishable, incorruptible, invincible. Thanks be to God who has given us this victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. We shall die, but we shall not die because our death was met in Christ.

We shall live because the imperishable seed of life is in us. And eternal life began the moment it all started. Thanks be to God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

No more of this preaching that doesn't give us Jesus, that doesn't give us the cross, that doesn't breathe Easter life, that doesn't give us the power of the counselor to come heal us and to make us new, to grow us. And when we're beginning to get that life to open our mouths and become farmers and start scattering, scattering everywhere the wonderful news of Jesus Christ abroad by our conduct, by our words, by our life, we are farmers ready to go. Scattering seed.

This day, this day, this day is my first Father's Day without my dad. Ninety-one years he went to be with the Lord in January. And after he passed, I remembered something.

And I said to my sister, she went back to Connecticut to the house and began to put things together. I said, oh Kate, there's a Bible somewhere in that house. My dad had so many Bibles.

There's a Bible somewhere in that house. And in the very back cover, he's written a letter to us. I want you to find it.

And she gathered up. She couldn't find it, but they packed it all and they took it home. You see, when my dad was 46, half a lifetime ago for him, October of his 46th year, we stood in front of my mother's casket.

My mother had died so young. And here losing, losing mom and suddenly being with my dad and being with our family. And my dad got on an airplane to head back to San Francisco for work.

And while he was en route and in flight, the plane went into catastrophic failure. All the hydraulic systems were lost. The landing gear, the flaps, there was no way to descend.

And so the cabin was prepared to crash. They got them in the crash positions. They taught them everything they need to know for the crash.

The pilot or somebody went down into the belly of the plane to see if they could control the airplane manually, the hydraulic system from a manual perspective. See if they could get it to work on some level and so down they were able to inch their way down. And my dad knowing that this is it.

Two weeks after we lost our mom, now we're losing our dad. So he writes this note. He says, Greg, he says, Kathy, he said, Dad, bless you.

I want to bless you. I want you to know my love is in you. I want you to know how proud I am of each of you.

I want you to know my assurance of the great life that you will have here. But my assurance that that day will come when everlasting life in Jesus Christ will be ours and we will be together again. The plane goes down and the farmer is still scattering seed, still writing it down so that we might know.

No, no, it's not just the pleasures of this earthly life. The Lord has promised us the kingdom of God and in it is eternal life. And there he is writing with hope and blessing and life inside of it because that life is possible in Jesus Christ our Lord.

That is the imperishable seed that can make us born again in Christ. And oh, my father had faith because when he was 46, my brother, he knew nothing about this. My brother was in rebellion when my dad wrote this, but my dad just pronounced life over him.

My brother, my brother wouldn't be still 59 years old until he came to life in Jesus. Long time that my dad saw as he was going down and you know he lived. By the way, the plane, my sister says that some foam went on the runway and somehow in some way and I never saw the letter until this spring.

You and I, we were made to scatter seed, but we can't scatter what we don't have. Are you born again in Christ? Has Christ come to live in you? No, no, not just because you're thinking it or you've adopted it with your mind. Has he, has he done that miracle of life inside of you? Have you seen that new life sprouting inside of you? If you don't have it, say it because then we can pray for you for the miracle of life that happened to you, to come around you and watch the Lord do what only he can do.

But if you have it, are you still being nurtured in it or has the devil deadened you? Has he soured you? Are you lost in the things of the world? He wants to revive you today. He wants to revive all of us today to let that wonderful, imperishable, incorruptible seed grow us to the blade, to the shoot, to the full ear, to the full crop until we're farmers sowing seed. Oh, dear friends, there's nothing like this life, but I am sick and tired of the perishable seed going out and out and out and not coming to the real truth of the matters.

It's about Jesus Christ. It's about his lordship. It's about his death, his resurrection.

That is what the Holy Spirit can do to bring us to life, is that life inside of you today. Oh, Lord Jesus, how we ask you to continue to sow that seed deep inside of us and to open our mouths and to open our lives that we might be farmers scattering that seed and having front row seats to see what only you can do to

bring to eternal life those who don't know you, to heal the sin-sick soul. Lord, we praise you this day.

We love you. We give you all the glory and all the honor. Nurture us, Lord, in the imperishable seed, the living, abiding word of God.

Amen. Let us stand and confirm our faith together with one voice.

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