

Let me start today by asking two favors of you today as you. First, I know that many of you have spent hour after hour in the fields on combines and grain trucks. So first, I ask that you will indulge me to let me speak about wheat today despite you possibly being a little sick of the subject. Secondly, if this preacher that has spent too much time in the cities lately misspeaks about wheat and wheat farming, please forgive me.

When you read our text for the day in the King James, it almost sounds as if Jesus is talking about corn, not wheat. Either way our lesson would be the same. However, since wheat and barley were the main crops of Jesus' day, with good confidence I can say that Jesus spoke of wheat. And while you may be sick of wheat, our text has a great lesson. Sometimes parables are hard for us to understand because the object or the story that Jesus uses has so many cultural nuances to discern, things that are hard for us to understand living 2000 years after Jesus first told the parable. But as far as this parable, I think it will be very easy to understand for many of you, who deal with wheat for a living.

Listen again to the short parable. "Jesus said, 'This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. ²⁷ Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. ²⁸ All by itself the soil produces grain-- first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head.'" I don't mean to trivialize the hard work that goes into wheat farming. But I think any wheat farmer would have to admit, that while there might be a little more to it today than in Jesus' day, the basic truth of the parable remains. For wheat farmer back then and now, there are two main things to be done. First the wheat must be planted and some months

later it must be harvested. In the meantime, the wheat grows. The farmer goes about his other business on the farm. He goes to sleep, he gets up, he goes to town, he brushes his teeth, and the wheat grows. He feeds livestock, eats supper, talks to his friends, and the wheat grows. As one farmer told me you plant, and then sit back and wait for harvest.

But obviously Jesus wasn't teaching how to plant and grow wheat. He said that the Kingdom was like wheat farming. Well, how is that? Well just like wheat, God's kingdom grows automatically. That is actually the word that our parable uses. Yes, just like wheat grows automatically, so does God's kingdom. No it isn't that God's kingdom spring up all at once everywhere in everyone's heart. We don't just go to sleep and then wake up and everyone is a Christian. But as you know wheat doesn't grow overnight either. As our text puts it, first the stalk, then the head, then the kernel in the head. But just like there is no doubt that wheat continues to grow, God's kingdom also surely grows. We go to sleep, we get up, we go to town, we brush our teeth, and the kingdom grows. This should be a great comfort to us to know that we are not the ones who make God's kingdom grow. He does that work. To think that we could make it happen by ourselves would be like sleeping out with the wheat trying to slowly pull it out of the ground.

So, sit back and wait for the harvest. Well, not totally. It is easy to decide that is God does all the work, we have nothing to do. And at times we likely take much this same attitude. All of us know people that need to be members of the kingdom. But we figure that God will make it happen sooner or later without our help if he wants them as members. But as I am sure you could attest to, if you don't plant wheat, there will be nothing to harvest. So also, God makes the kingdom grow, but he has enlisted us as

farmers for that task. Unlike typical wheat farming, there is no perfect time to plant the kingdom. As the scriptures would say we plant in season and out of season. The seed is free. It was all paid for when Jesus went to the cross. There he gave us all the seed, that free grace-filled seed, that we could every need. He continues to fill us up with more seed to plant each time we hear his word, each time we go to his supper. We plant it at the office, we plant it in our homes, we plant it at school, we plant it at baseball games. And then we sit back and wait for the harvest. We don't have to pull faith out of our family, friends, and coworkers. We just plant, and trust God to grow the seed. And eventually at the end of time, the full harvest will come. The kingdom, full of full-grown Christians will be harvested. All of us will be thrown into the great grain-elevator in the sky called heaven. There we will celebrate the Kingdom. There and only there we will see the full result of our seed planting. You might well see someone who you planted God's kingdom into, but never saw anything grow while you were around. But God will have made that seed grow into faith. He will have watered the seed at the font with his holy name.

So plant away, there is always more seed, more grace. Don't be stingy with the seed. Plant it everywhere you go. God will do the rest. And we plant we pray, Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as in heaven. Amen.