Introduction
Many months ago now, Leigh ordered our garden seeds from Stokes Seeds – we were excited about the new crop which we would harvest, down the road – at about this time of the year.

The box of seeds arrived in a timely fashion – sometime in March, I believe.

We checked the packages of peas
and broad beans
and carrots
and beets, our mouths watering as we thought about the taste of home-grown veggies and how 'real' they would taste, as opposed to those rather tasteless veggies we purchase at the supermarket.

Endless weeks of snow continued – and our anticipation of gardening waned as we waited for snow to melt,
and ground to dry out enough to even ‘get on the land.’

We usually have peas planted by the end of April – at the very latest.

But this year . . . the last bit of snow, tucked into shaded crevices in our old tumble-down barn – disappeared by the first of June!

Our peas were finally planted mid-June . . . but by now, all excitement had disappeared, and a garden which is usually about ½ acre is about 10 rows, this year.

Even after the seeds had been planted, it seemed to take weeks before we noticed any little green shoots, pushing through hard soil . . . and weeds, which made such a remarkable comeback, after so much snow!

What does our garden have to do with ‘Kingdom building?’
In order to ‘grow’ a garden, the seed has to be planted.

In order to ‘grow’ the Kingdom of God, seeds of Good News have to be planted.
As long as those vegetable seeds remain in the package, only one thing will happen – NOTHING!

There will be no possibility of harvest.
Because a seed has to ‘die’ in order to live.

Over these past weeks, we have been talking about service to God, through practical applications of living.

We, who call ourselves ‘believers,’
‘followers of Christ’,
the Church – should be the planters of seeds of Good News . . .

seeds of hope
and justice
and righteousness.

Our lives should be the visible expression of God’s love and grace and mercy in our communities.
Our lives may be the only ‘Bible’ some may ever read.

What others ‘read’ in our lives may be interpreted as just a work of fiction,
or it may be interpreted as a great mystery novel,
or a soap opera
or a biography of God . . .

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God’s mission is that we, as His missionaries, plant seeds of Good News, salvation and forgiveness, which will eventually yield a harvest in the Kingdom of God.

**Scripture Reading**: Mark 4:26-29 adapted

> 26 Jesus went on to say, “The Kingdom of God is like someone who plants seed in the ground. 27 He sleeps at night, is up and about during the day, and all the while the seeds are sprouting and growing, but that person who planted the seed does not know how it grows. 28 It is the ground that makes the seeds sprout and grow into plants – first the tender stalk appears, then the head, and finally the head full of grain. 29 When the grain is ready, the farmer cuts it, because the harvest time has come.”

The assumption would be that the farmer is planting good, clean seed. The thing is this, whether he plants pea seeds  
or bean seeds  
or carrot seeds  
or weed seeds, growth will continue.

*So my question to you is this: what kind of seeds are you scattering?*

We all scatter seeds, and once they have been scattered around, you cannot take them back. We may be planting all kinds of seeds or even weeds, but they will continue to grow in the soil of our minds and hearts, and there will be a harvest of fruit or a crop of weeds . . . but the seeds that we plant will produce some kind of crop.

We plant seeds by our behaviours, our thoughts and our actions.

We are told in **Romans 12:2**:  
“DON’T copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a complete change in the way you think. Then you will always be able to determine what God really wants – what is good and is pleasing to him and is perfect.” (Romans 12:2 adapted)

Because the way we think will dictate the way we act.

The farmer does not make the seed grow. Once the seed has been planted, it does not matter whether he sleeps all day, or ever tends the seed again, until it is ready for harvest – that seed will continue to grow! So it is with us.

Whether we plant seeds of hope and grace and mercy or seeds of doubt and fear and injustice . . . those seeds will continue to grow . . . are you planting seeds or weeds?

Each seed contains within itself the miracle of death and life and growth.

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One tiny seed in a package may seem insignificant. One tiny seed planted in the soil multiplies its fruit many times over. We do not fully understand how it grows. We do not fully understand the interaction of soil and sun and rain – in fact; we have no control over the elements of nature. We can discover things; we can rearrange them; we can develop them; but create them we cannot.

So it is with the Kingdom of God. We do not create the Kingdom of God. That Kingdom IS God’s. But we can hinder its harvest by the seeds we plant. We can discourage it, we can attempt to undermine it, but the Kingdom is God’s, and behind all things is God and the power and will of God. (Barclay, 1975, p. 105)

In the parable of the sower, found in Mark 4:3-8, the condition of the soil plays a great part in the growth of the seed and the eventual amount of harvest. In these few verses, the growth of the seed is not dependent upon anything, other than being planted. The mysterious power of the seed itself is emphasized.

Can a seed produce anything other than its own kind? If I plant a bean seed, what kind of harvest may I expect to reap?

If I plant seeds of discontent should I expect to reap a harvest of contentment? If I plant seeds of agitation and aggravation, should I expect my life to produce any other kind of fruit?

In this story which Jesus related, the farmer had only two functions with regard to the seed – to sow it, and to harvest it. All the rest of the time, the seed can manage for itself. So, from a spiritual perspective, we need only take care that we sow good seeds – seeds of truth, seeds of good example, and seeds of grace and mercy. “We need not ask the attitude of the hearts on which we scatter the seed, nor ask how much the ‘seed’ was appreciated; we do not need to measure its daily growth or attempt to secure its fruitfulness.” (Exell)

Our task is to plant seeds of Good News in the lives of others. Our task is to sow the seeds of the ‘Christ-like’ kind of fruit that the Holy Spirit produces in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23 NLT)

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We read that . . .

“. . . at night, is up and . . . during the day, . . . the seeds are sprouting and growing, but that person who planted the seed does not know how it grows. It is the ground that makes the seeds sprout and grow into plants.” (Mark 4:27-28 adapted)

“The seed once sown grows according to its own nature; it has life in itself; and when planted in good soil, and subjected to the power of both sunshine and rain, it silently and mysteriously develops the life that is in it, according to the ordinary principles of growth. It has an inherent vitality, a growth power, which springs up “we know not how;” we only see that it grows. The brown clod of the field is first tinged with green; then covered like a carpet; then sways and rustles in the wind. So is the kingdom of God; the field of the heart, the field of the world, are thus covered with gracious fruit.” (Exell)

The Kingdom of God is like a seed which, that . . . when planted . . . continues to grow night and day, yielding a productive harvest in its time . . .

When we plant seeds of faith in the lives of another, we may not see any growth for years . . . in fact; we may never see signs of growth!

Often nature’s growth is imperceptible.

Many years ago we planted tree sprouts, each about 1 foot tall, along the length of our lane – which is about ¼ mile long!

For years, those little sprouts did not seem to grow even an inch!

But now, years later, we have magnificent evergreens edging our lane – kind of feels like driving through a park – but daily growth seemed negligible.

So it is with the Kingdom of God.

We read that Kingdom building started with 12 disciples, who studied under the tutelage of Christ, Himself, for three years.

By the time the early church was formed, there were 120, then thousands.

Today, there are millions of believers around the world because a seed was planted in the heart of another.

Because God’s mission is to build His kingdom through us, His Church.

Because Phillip planted the seeds of Good News into the life a high-ranking Ethiopian official, who was on his way back home, the Ethiopian Orthodox church today has more than ten million members!

We read this account in Acts 8:26-40.

When a seed is planted, its growth is constant.

Night and day, while we sleep, and when we are awake, growth continues.

Growth is not spasmodic.

A growing plant does not take ‘time out’ to rest from all that work of growing.

It continues until it reaches maturity.

So it is with the kingdom of God.

“The work of God goes on quietly, unceasingly as God unfolds His plan. We, on the other hand, often tend to be spasmodic. One day we take one step forward; the next day, we are bombarded with life, and we feel like we have taken ten steps backwards.”

(Barclay, 1975, p. 106)

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“This great law of spiritual growth is not always recognized, nor are folks always content with it. We are eager for quick results; we have not the patience to wait for the slow development from seed to fruit.” (Exell)

“Growth is inevitable. There is nothing as powerful as growth. A tree can spit a concrete pavement with the power of its growth. A weed can push its head through an asphalt path. Nothing can stop growth. So it is with the kingdom of God. In spite of our rebellion and disobedience, God’s work goes on; nothing in the end can stop the purposes of God.” (Barclay, 1975, p. 108)

And there is a day of harvest.
It is a time when the seed reaches full maturity and the grain is ready to be gathered.
There are two sides to harvest.
The good fruit is gathered and the weeds are destroyed.

From a spiritual perspective, harvest and judgment go hand in hand. We read in the book of Romans that:

“. . . we will all stand before God’s judgment seat. And each of us will give an account of himself or herself to God . . . therefore, do not be a stumbling block or an obstacle to anyone . . . instead, plant seeds of peace and righteousness and love instead of seeds of conflict and malice and hatred.” (Romans 14:11, 12, 19 my paraphrase)

If we call ourselves believers, Christians, followers of Christ, the Body of Christ, the fellowship of believers – then we have a responsibility to plant good seeds in the lives of others.
Because a seed, once planted, will take root and grow.
Let them be seeds of hope and goodness, rather than seeds of hopelessness and iniquity.

How do we apply that to our current lives?

It is not our responsibility to ‘grow grace’ in others. God does that through His Holy Spirit.
It is our responsibility to demonstrate God’s grace and love in our own lives.
Confine your care to the seed you sow, and – calm and hopeful – leave the rest to God.

“Take care of your actions, and your character will take care of itself. Harbour no thoughts of despair. Be patient with yourself. Plants that are meant to live long grow slowly. A mushroom grows swiftly, and passes away swiftly. The oak grows slow to stand long. Grace is meant to live forever, and grows, therefore, slowly. Each good act helps it a little, but you cannot trace the help. If God has patience with you, have patience with yourself; and make not your grace less by worrying because it is not more.” (Exell)

“This is God’s plan in all things. He produces nothing by great leaps and transitions; all His great works are quiet processes. Light and darkness melt into each other; the seasons change by gradual transition; all life, vegetable and animal, grows from a germ;
and the higher and nobler the type of life, the slower and more gradual is the process of growth. The oak attains to maturity more slowly than the flower; man than the lower animals; the mind than the body; the soul than the mind.” (Exell)

As followers of Christ we have a responsibility to plant seeds of Good News through our words, our actions, our thoughts and our behaviours.

“This is what the LORD says: ‘Stop talking like a fool! If you change your heart and return to me, I will take you back. If you speak good words rather than worthless ones, you will be my spokesman. Then you can continue to serve me and will stand in my presence. You must influence them; do not let them influence you!’” (Jeremiah 15:19 adapted)

Jesus prayed this prayer for His followers:

“Father, I do not ask you to take them out of the world, but I do ask you to protect them, to keep them safe from the Evil One. Make them ready for your service through your truth; teach them your word, which is truth. I am one with them, and you are one with me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.” (John 17:15, 17, 23 adapted)

You must influence them – do not let them influence you!

Who are you influencing in your life?

And what type of influence are you having?

Everyone’s perception of Christianity is coloured by the Christians they have met – the real, the phoney!

Every non-believer can think of someone who claims to be ‘Christian.’

If they are thinking of you, what is their perception of Christ and His Kingdom?

What kind of seed are you scattering about in the lives of others?

Is the seed you are scattering building the kingdom or choking it with weeds?

The mission of kingdom-building is God’s;
the vessel He uses to build His kingdom is you and me.
What kind of fruit will the seeds you are planting yield at harvest time?

So, when people are thinking of you, what is their perception of Christ and His Kingdom?

**Bibliography**


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