

GOD'S WORD IN GOD'S WORLD *Are we wasting our time?*

Psalm 126; OT: Jeremiah 17:22-24; NT: 1Corinthians 3:1-9; Gospel: Mark 4:1-34

Key idea: Despite ‘apparently unpromising start’ and ‘small beginnings’, through his proclaimed word, Jesus, the ‘Sower King’ will ‘secretly’ advance God’s Kingdom rule and produce God’s intended harvest. This will occur amidst hard opposing hearts, competing life pressures and anxieties; the deceitfulness of riches; persecution and evil.

Key AIM

To hear, trust and obey the Word of God,
since this is the way God’s kingdom grows.



Thank you for your kind welcome LET'S PRAY

Merciful God open our ears and plant your word in the good soil of our souls this day that it might not only be life to us but also to the lost who still need to be found. In Jesus' name, Amen



Good morning! It's great to be with you again
 Geetha is sorry to not be here! But says a big hello.
 THIS IS US with growing numbers of grandchildren!



This is Australia! As you heard from the BCA4Kids video, Bush Church Aid exists to send Christian men, women and families to ‘go the distance’ to give **every person in the Bush every chance to know Jesus**’

It's a big mission with 7.2 girls, boys and growin ups living in >12,400 communities spread across 99.3% of Australia

With your praying and monthly giving, these are **some of the places** we are currently sending & supporting BCA ‘missionaries’ in the field.

I'm the regional ‘bush guy’ for SA and NT. It's my great joy to connect Christians & Churches like you with *Jesus mission in the Bush through BCA*

WHY PARTNER WITH BCA and JESUS' MISSION IN THE BUSH?



This is Glen and Beth McDonald with their FIVE children living in Roxby Downs. Roxby is a mining community 700km north of Adelaide in the desert. Glen Pastors Roxby Down's Community Church.

With a million people in Adelaide,
why bother with the 4000 people who live there?

Why bother when every year 30% leave the Church and the town?
Why bother when last year 50% of their Church members left?

It can be so discouraging, so **why do Glen and Beth stay?**

This brings us to Jesus' three seed parables in Mark chapter 4

THIS BRINGS US TO MARK'S GOSPEL?



By Mark chapter 4, some people have believed! But not many!

Can we imagine what this small group of disciples who have left home and jobs to follow Jesus might be thinking and feeling?

Is Jesus really God's promised King?

Or are we wasting our time?

How convinced are you about Jesus?

Do you ever wonder if YOU might be wasting your time?

Jesus' 'seed' parables are Jesus' word for doubting & discouraged disciples in the face of dis-interest, discouragement and real opposition.

**FIRST we need to manage our expectations understanding
how God's kingdom will grow**



“Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow... (4:3)

It's the most ordinary farming story

Jesus is first describing HIS own preaching ministry as God's Sower King.

Since Adam and Eve and evidenced in Israel's story,

God's word in God's world has always fallen on different 'soils'



How discouraging that three of the four hearts that God's Word lands in will amount to nothing, despite two having promising starts!

Why are Glen and Beth McDonald so committed to staying in Roxby Downs despite the discouragements and distance from family?

For remote community aboriginal people coming for 4 weeks blocks to Nungalinya many don't return. It can take years before they can read.

Up to 20 years to gain a basic diploma! Why does Annette Anderson bother?

Because, Jesus says there is one soil that not only hears the word, but accepts it and bears fruit, 30, 60, 100 times!

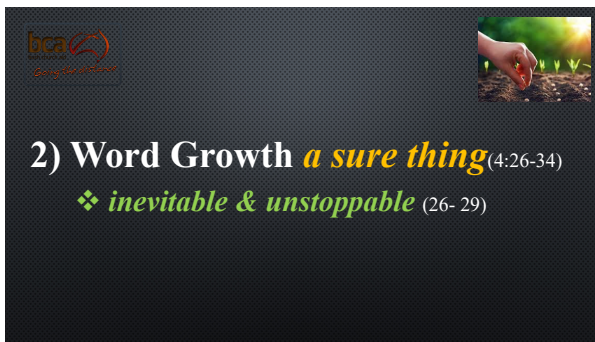
Who are these people? In Mark chapter 4 verse 10, it's *the 12 Apostles and those with them* who keep coming to Jesus for an explanation of his parables.

And TWICE we heard, Jesus explained everything to them. (4:11, 34)

A 'good soil disciple' is someone who keeps coming to Jesus. and his word. They are hungry to understand it for their lives. By his Spirit Jesus delights to lead the 'seeker' into the truth and grace of his Word

Now, perhaps like Geetha and I you have a **'fund manager'** for your super. If your fund manager was getting 30, 60, 100x return on your money, wouldn't you want to invest more with them? Might you be enthusiastically telling your family and friends to come listen to them and invest with them?

Jesus is the ultimate 'soul fund manager' not just guaranteeing eternity for any 'good soil soul' but, guaranteeing massive kingdom growth!



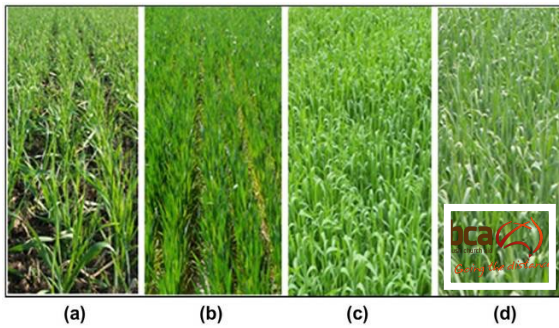
Again, we have a farmer '*scattering the seed on the ground*'



Now, I grew up on a farm. Sowing season was hard work for us all. While my Dad spent 100's of hours on the tractor sowing seed from sun-up to sundown, my mum would be up at 5am to milk the cows. She would do it again at 4pm. Us four kids also had jobs to do. It was a team effort!

Why? Because if my Dad didn't sow the seed, there was no chance of a crop to harvest!

What could my Dad do to make sure there was a crop to harvest after he'd sown the seed? What can we do to ensure there are souls to reap?



What does Jesus say in v27-28

²⁷ *The farmer sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how.* ²⁸ The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear.

My dad knew his work was to sow and reap.

He knew, *the earth produces by itself.*

So, being a God-fearing Christian man, he would pray for rain.

What does Paul say to a knowledgeable gifted Church in 1Corinthians 3:7?

It's *God who gives the growth.* We plant the word. God grows the word!



The Hurley's, were the BCA supported Pastor of Saltbush Church in Broken Hill. Brendon shared this lady's testimony who started coming ...

“After hearing the first message at Saltbush, I was compelled to return and bring anyone willing to come knowing they will hear the gospel. I am so grateful to God for providing a church in Broken Hill that feels safe to bring new people and encourages me to be useful in the week ahead.”



This lady brought a **friend** to church who was feeling empty and dissatisfied. She heard the Bible read and preached at church. She said yes to reading a gospel with Laura Hurley. God grew the word to see God's love in Jesus. She started bringing her kids and her a-theist husband to church.

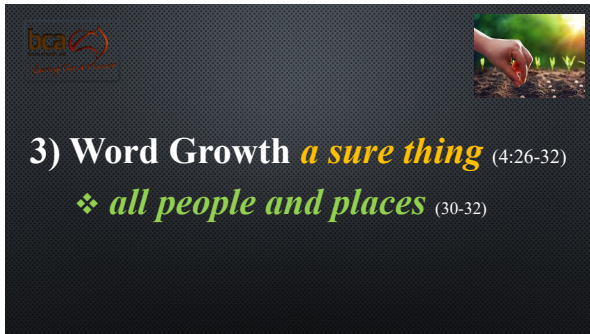
6 months later she was baptized with her whole family in a back yard Broken Hill pool!

Although our initial results from sharing God's word about Jesus may seem small, unimpressive & discouraging, God's word is powerful to save!

What other power in the cosmos can save a soul from perishing in Hell to resurrection life in Heaven?

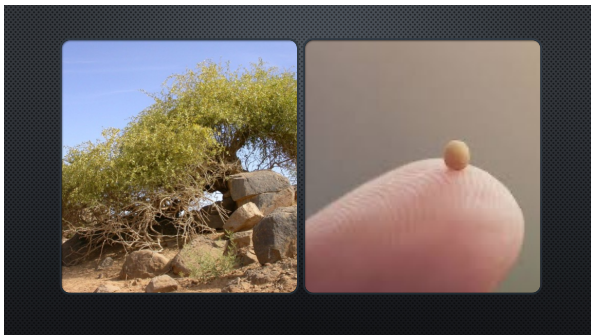
So, we keep sowing! keep praying! WHY

BECAUSE ii. Kingdom Growth is not only *a sure thing* but it's *for all people in all places* (v.30-32)



³⁰ And [JESUS] said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God...

³¹ It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, ³² yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”



The simple contrast is between the size of the huge Mustard tree that grows from such a small unimpressive hidden beginning!

How big will God’s kingdom tree be?

600 years before Jesus, God promised this in **Ezekiel 17:22-24**



22 Thus says the Lord GOD: "I myself will take a sprig from the lofty top of the cedar and will set it out. I will break off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one, and I myself will plant it on a high and lofty mountain. 23 On the mountain height of Israel will I plant it, that it may bear branches and produce fruit and become a noble cedar. And under it will dwell every kind of bird; in the shade of its branches birds of every sort will nest. 24 And all the trees of the field shall know that I am the LORD..." EZEKIEL 17:22-24

Who is this 'tender twig' God has planted?

Jesus, on his Cross on 'the mountain of Israel' outside Jerusalem. WHY? So that any person from any nation can come find forgiveness and shelter in his Kingdom tree - safe from the coming Judgment when Jesus returns.

Here we are, a few of the many 'different birds' from different nations who have found refuge from God's coming judgment in His Kingdom tree...

Imagine jumping into a time machine to go back 2000 years

"Hi, I'm a saved bird from a nation called Australia / China"

"Where on God's earth is Australia or China?" they ask?

I'm one of 2.67 billion believers from 10,000 of the 17,400 people groups!

"How can this be?" they ask?

Well, despite all the hard and horrible stuff that will happen to you, you keep witnessing to people about Jesus! You don't stop!

It's because for 2000 years Christians have kept counting the cost to leave the 99 to go the distance to preach the word so the lost could be found.



We cannot know if or when the Spirit will grow His word that we share with people in our cities OR with people in the bush.

Here's the thing:

If my dad didn't do the hard work of sowing the seed every year, he knew there was no chance of having a crop to harvest – rain or no rain.

Perhaps you feel you are wasting your time inviting people to Church.
Not according to Jesus!

Perhaps you think partnering to send BCA missionaries like the McDonalds in Roxby Downs or at Nungalinaya College **is not a good use of your income. Not according to Jesus.**



This is a photo from a kids holiday club at Roxby Down's Community Church. Let me tell you about 'Yum-chi' (grey top).

Yum-chi and his parents immigrated from Hong Kong to Roxby Downs. They did not speak much English. Here is Yum-chi learning about God's love for him in Jesus dying on the cross for his forgiveness.

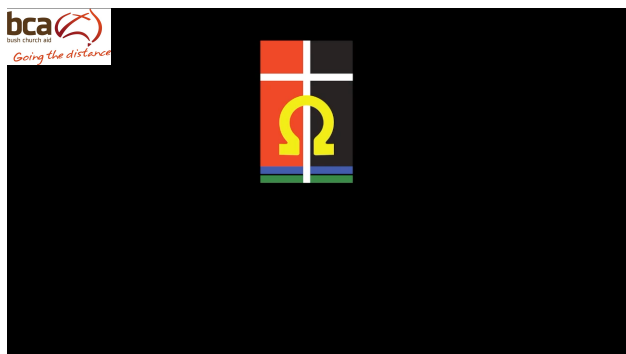
It's just one of many stories of people being saved in Roxby!

Such is God's love for 'people of all nations' he's bring them to remote mining towns so they can hear and learn about Jesus and be saved.



With your help, BCA has committed to supporting Annette Anderson along with other people and ministries at Nungalinya committing \$500,000!

Here's a short video to explain WHY



It's just a few beautiful stories of the 100's of people saved.

For those yet to sign up with BCA to pray and financially support Annette at Nungalinga might you consider doing that now?

BECAUSE



Because your praying and giving is so precious to our missionaries in the field I finish with this word from those sowing the word in SA and NT.

PLAY THANKYOU VIDEO

