

Day 5

# THE HARVEST WILL SURPRISE US

## MARK 4:26-29

<sup>26</sup> He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. <sup>27</sup> Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. <sup>28</sup> All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. <sup>29</sup> As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."

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Mark leaves us in the dark on the meaning of this parable. Maybe the disciples never asked Jesus for an explanation. Biblical scholars have advocated many different possible interpretations, all of which reveal an aspect of truth about the harvest. Let's explore a few of the options.

1. Jesus' emphasis could be on the inevitability of the harvest. The farmer scatters the seed but has little understanding of what happens after that. He watches in wonder as it grows until the time of harvest. In a similar way, we share the good news of Jesus (scatter the seed), but can't open peoples' eyes to the truth of the gospel. Once the seed is sown, God does his work. Despite our lack of understanding, the harvest is assured, even if it takes some time. It's going to happen. We don't know how, but God will do his work.

2. Jesus' emphasis could be on the patience of the farmer. He just has to wait and continue his routine until the time for harvest, and then he can start reaping. Some of us have had to wait a long time to bring in the harvest that God has promised. That's okay. You can't hurry God. We don't lose heart or give up. We love people, share the good news, and patiently follow and obey Jesus until the time comes for reaping.

3. Jesus' emphasis could be on the lack of the farmer's contribution. It doesn't matter if the farmer is talented or hard-working or not, the crop grows anyway. It's easy for us to think that the churches or individuals with the most resources or greatest abilities will produce the greatest crop. That's not





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true. For example, research shows that church plants are often more effective in evangelism than larger churches. The power to save is in the gospel (the seed) not in the capability of those who share it. It doesn't matter if you are unsure or feel incapable, just talk about Jesus and the harvest will come.

4. Jesus' emphasis could be on the hiddenness of God's work. Although the farmer doesn't understand it, something is happening in the seeds that will become apparent when the grain is ripe. We often have no idea what God is doing. We can count people and finances, but these may not be accurate signs of God's hidden work. It's in harvest times that we see the results of God's action behind the scenes. You may be surprised by what God is already doing in the lives of your friends.

5. Jesus' emphasis could be on the sudden activity needed when the harvest is ripe. The farmer lives a normal routine of sleeping and getting up until the harvest comes. Then it's all hands on deck. There is much to be done. Don't think that your life will be much easier when God works in power. A time of reaping will ask more of us than other times. There will be so many new Christians to disciple. We will be stretched and challenged. God will ask more of us.

In Mark's Gospel, this parable sits with the parable of the soils and the parable of the mustard seed. As we saw yesterday, the parable of the soils emphasises the challenges of reaping the harvest as well as the huge harvest that will ensue. The parable of the mustard seed shows that while the kingdom starts small, it will flourish. It appears that the common theme in this section of Mark's Gospel is the size of the harvest, so whatever the main emphasis of Jesus (and all of the above are true), this parable emphasises that a great harvest is coming.

The work of God is surprising and astonishing. There will be disappointments and discouragements and sometimes it will seem that nothing is happening. But God is always at work and in time there will be a huge harvest. Our role is to share the gospel and pray. To wait expectantly and pray. And then to bring in the harvest when God says that it's time to reap. You can be sure that the harvest will be greater than we could imagine.



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**READY FOR HARVEST STORY:**

## **GATEWAY BAPTIST CHURCH LOGAN**

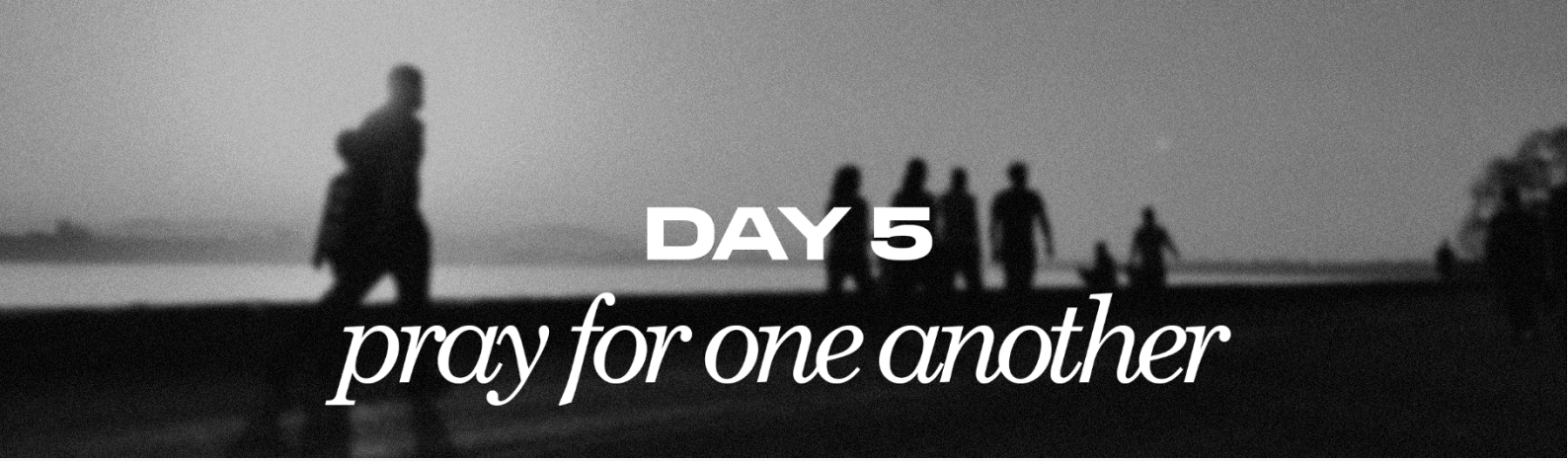
I heard someone once say, "The light of Jesus shines the brightest in the darkest places." Logan is a broken community, but we have seen Jesus powerfully at work. Five years ago, we started with 44 people gathered in a local café. Since then we have seen 149 people make first-time decisions to follow Jesus and many get baptised. God has grown a multicultural church of all ages, socio-economic backgrounds and every other diversity possible.

Recently we baptised a lady who had spent almost 20 years in prison for drug trafficking and who walked through our doors straight out of prison. After a journey of ups and downs and lots of questions, she gave her life to Jesus. She stood in the waters of baptism a few weeks back and said, "I was never ever going to walk through the doors of a church, and never thought I would be baptised, but now I love Jesus!"

A couple arrived from Kenya in early 2022 and came to church not long after. They have found a community in their new country where they are loved and accepted. They were baptised at the start of the year together.

We have had story after story of broken people finding Jesus and a community where they are accepted. We are believing for more, but God has already been bringing in a harvest. We have grown from 44 to over 200 on Sundays now. The light of Jesus shines the brightest in the darkest places!





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## *pray for one another*

Many from our church would invite one person to Alpha in Term 3.

**Gateway Baptist Church - Redlands Campus**

That the war in Ukraine will end.

**Slavic Baptist Church**

Praying for a stirring of hearts resulting in revived faith within, and new faith of their friends and families! May His Kingdom come and his will be done in and through us!

**Northreach**

We would value prayer for unity through the outworking of our value statements, God Centred, People Focussed, Mission Oriented, that as we pursue these, we gain and maintain a right perspective of our love, care and support for each other and this flows over to the wider community.

**Maryborough Baptist Church**

That God raise up godly shepherds to minister into his churches and that no church in Queensland would struggle to find a pastor.

**QB Pastoral Services**

That by the end of 2023 we would see 24 people put their faith in Jesus for the first time through Lifepoint ministries.

**Life Point Church**

We pray that we would see a mighty move of God in revival here on the Sunshine Coast.

**Lifepointe Sunshine Coast**

