

Sembrando, Sowing!

Mark 4:26-34 **The Parable of the Growing Seed**

Last time I visited the country of Haiti, I had the chance to visit the brand new building of **Conaspeh**: which is the National Spiritual Council of Haitian Churches. They were sharing with us, with pride and resilience, how they were re-establishing and re-opening their school and seminary a year after their old building was destroyed in the 2010-devastating earthquake. When we arrived, we were welcomed by a group of local pastors and seminarians. It was a very hot summer, so immediately they invited us to the shade of a Big tree and shared with us refreshing coconut water.

In addition to that, they shared their hopes and needs, their joys and sorrows, their stories of survival and their daily struggles. Is a memory that I will treasure forever.

It was not until we were ready to leave that I saw a big sign with Conaspeh's logo. As an artist it caught my attention, and in a matter of seconds, it touched me deeply within my soul. Why, you may ask? Because Conaspeh's logo is a pictorial metaphor, (a visual parable of some sorts), of the Kingdom of God (Realm of God).

For them, God's kingdom or the Realm of God, is like a massive, healthy and very tall tree, that connects the ground (earth), with the heavens. But, there is one thing... this beautiful, strong and fruitful tree is upside-down. Yes, you hear me well; the tree is presented with the top at the bottom and the bottom at the top.

But, wait, there is more. This inverted tree has deep roots that grow into the heavens stretching wide, and branches with tick foliage that rest in the ground covering a wide area. This tree basically connects the here and now, connects our daily life, with the heavens, with God's grace, with God's presence and creative activity.

And in the middle of the foliage, exactly where the branches of the inverted tree touch the ground, lies the Church (capital C), as one of the fruits of this amazing inverted tree. Rev. Patrick Villier, *explained to me: "our logo is a parable and it represents "God's mandate to the Church to work and to help the poor to obtain the fruits of heaven."*

The fruits of heaven... one is called to work, (we are called) to work (to do, to act) and to help (to collaborate, to co-create) with the poor, for the poor... so they (and us)... so, we can all obtain, and enjoy the fruits of heaven... the fruits of the Spirit... here and now.

Jesus explained: The kingdom of God is like a man or a woman who scatters seed on the ground. However the growth of God's kingdom is mysterious, and is beyond our understanding. As Christians we are call to sow.

To sow the seeds of love and hope especially we are called to sow seeds of hope for the poor (the least of these); mainly, because they are not poor on their own willingness. No, they are victims of an oppressive and evil economic system that benefits a few by exploiting many.

As a church, what are we doing with the families whose realities are the by-product of our own financial sinful system?

As Christians, especially when we have privilege, we are called to sow the seeds of justice. We are called to water and to cultivate Justice, because love without justice is hollow, is incomplete and perpetuates oppression. We have to be the voice for the voiceless. We have to be ready, to stand,

to advocate, to fight for our brothers and sisters who are being dehumanized just because of the color of their skin, or the language they speak, or the documentation that they might lack. God calls us to sow the seeds of humanization and equality.

And the beauty of all this, is that once we do what we are supposed to do, God takes control of the rest (of the growth), our actions, in the big scheme of things are as small as a mustard seed, and might even seem insignificant, but God is the one who ultimately is in control, and makes them grow, shooting branches of abundant life, branches of new possibilities, branches of change and hope... allowing whoever is tired, weary or carrying heavy burdens to a place to rest and shade for protection.

God can do His work in some of the most seemingly impossible places and situations. This should encourage us to spread the Gospel, not just through words, but also through actions, everywhere we go and at every opportunity.

God is in control; God gives the increase but we have to work the fields?

I want to conclude by sharing some words from Archbishop Oscar

Arnulfo Romero from El Salvador. He was a Jesuit priest who spoke out against poverty, social injustice, assassinations and torture, and in 1980, was assassinated while offering mass.

He said: It helps now and then, to step back and take the long view. The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts; it is even beyond our vision. We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.

Nothing we do is complete, which is another way of saying that the kingdom always lies beyond us. No statement says all that could be said.

No prayer fully expresses our faith. No confession brings perfection; no pastoral visit brings wholeness.

No program accomplishes the church's mission.

No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about: We plant seeds that one-day will grow.

We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.

We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capability.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.

This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, and an opportunity for the lord's grace to enter and do the rest. We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future not our own. Amen.