

THE LORD'S GREATEST GIFT

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And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head" (Mark 4:26-28).

Everyone in the world has something that he or she wants very much. In fact, there are many things that people would like to have that they do not have. Perhaps you want something very much. You may even be saving up money so that one day you will be able to buy it. But there are many more things that you would like that you cannot buy. There are many things that you cannot get for yourselves. Now, what if someone suddenly gave you just what you wanted? That would make you very happy, wouldn't it?

You are probably anxious to grow up. But the only thing that you can do is to take care of yourselves, and wait for the Lord to make you grow. No one else can make you grow. No one can make anything grow in this world. A farmer plants seeds in the ground and takes care of them, but he does not make them grow. And if the Lord did not make them grow, there would be nothing that the farmer could do to raise his crops, and he would soon starve.

This is why the farmer thanks the Lord at the end of the summer for doing for him what he can not do for himself. And to show his thanks he brings some of the fruits of the ground, and offers them to the Lord. For the Lord made them, and they are really the Lord's.

The farmer plants the seeds in the ground, takes good care of them, and then watches them grow. First of all, a tiny stalk pokes through the ground. And then the stalk grows until it has leaves. Finally a precious grain appears on the plant. In this grain there is food. When the grain is ripe the farmer takes it to the mill, and there it is made into flour. The flour is then made into bread for people to eat.

Now as you are growing, your parents and teachers and ministers will tell you many things. They tell you about the Lord, and about how He created the world and everything in it. They tell you about heaven and the angels, and many more things. These ideas are like little seeds that are being planted in your minds. When you think about the ideas, you are like the farmer who takes care of the seeds after they have been planted in the ground.

As you think about these ideas and try to understand them, they will grow in your minds and become strong and beautiful. With each new thing you learn, the ideas that were first given to you become easier to understand.

But the most wonderful thing is that as the ideas grow, your love to the Lord grows. The more you know about the Lord and the more you understand what your parents and teachers tell you about the Lord, the more you love all of the people whom the Lord has created. This love is like the grain that grows on a plant. This grain is the real reason why the seed was planted. And when the grain is ripe, then you should thank the Lord for the wonderful thing that He has done. You should thank Him because you know that He has given you something that is more precious than anything else. It is more precious than any of the things that you think you might like to have.

At harvest time we thank the Lord for the food that He gives to the world. But you can also thank the Lord for the many other things that He does for you. You can thank Him for making you grow, and for making you happy. You can thank Him for the marvelous gifts that He gives to your growing minds. You can thank Him not only for the natural food that He gives us, but also for the heavenly food—which is a love for Him and for our neighbor. You could not possibly get this love for yourself, but it is this love that will give you real happiness in this life and in the life to come.

Amen.