



**WHY JESUS WAS ALWAYS
TALKING ABOUT PLANTS**

While Jesus' parables referred to everyday matters like tending sheep, catching fish, and saving money, far and away His stories were most often based on the agricultural cycle.



Why was Jesus always talking about plants?



Isaiah 61:1

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound.”



Luke 4:16–21

So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:



Luke 4:16–21

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”



Luke 4:16–21

Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, **“Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”**



Isaiah 61:11

For as the earth brings forth its bud, as the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.



Jesus talked about plants, seeds, soil, crops, and harvests so much because it was part of His mission prophetic mission statement.



A spiritual process akin to the agricultural cycle is how God intends the knowledge of His righteousness to spread throughout the earth.





Just as the agricultural cycle includes soil preparation, seed planting, and the cultivation, harvest, and preservation of the crop, in the “Cycle of Evangelism” these sequential steps are essential for true success in reaching people.





The first step in the Evangelism Cycle is to prepare the soil of the heart.

Building friendship and trust opens the heart for the reception of truth. We do this by drawing close to people through being kind, intentionally social, and ministering to practical needs.



Luke 8:11–15



And when a great multitude had gathered, and they had come to Him from every city, He spoke by a parable: “A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it.



Luke 8:4–15



“Now the parable is this: **The seed is the word of God...** the ones that fell on the **good ground** are those who, having heard the word with a noble and **good heart**, keep it and bear fruit with patience.





The sowers of the seed have a work to do in preparing hearts to receive the gospel. In the ministry of the word there is too much sermonizing, and too little of real heart-to-heart work. There is need of personal labor for the souls of the lost. In Christlike sympathy we should come close to men individually, and seek to awaken their interest in the great things of eternal life.





Their hearts may be as hard as the beaten highway, and apparently it may be a useless effort to present the Saviour to them; but while logic may fail to move, and argument be powerless to convince, the love of Christ, revealed in personal ministry, may soften the stony heart, so that the seed of truth can take root.





The second step in the Evangelism Cycle is to sow the seed of truth.

After building friendship and trust, we should test the soil by planting seeds of truth. This is the time to share religious literature, media, or our personal testimony.



Ecclesiastes 11:4–6



He who observes the wind will not sow, and he who regards the clouds will not reap... In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening do not withhold your hand; for **you do not know which will prosper, either this or that, or whether both alike will be good.**



Isaiah 32:20



Blessed are you who sow beside all waters, who send out freely the feet of the ox and the donkey.





You are to sow the seeds of truth in every place. Wherever you can gain access, hold forth the word of God. Sow beside all waters. You may not at once see the result of your labors, but be not discouraged. Speak the words that Christ gives you. Work in His lines. Go forth everywhere as He did during His ministry on the earth. The world's Redeemer had many hearers, but few followers.





Too many people make the mistake of not sowing the seed of truth because they're afraid they'll do it poorly. While we never want to approach someone with Bible truth in a careless manner, we far too often go to the opposite extreme of being so cautious that we never actually sow the seed. **It is better to risk failure because of a poor approach than to guarantee failure for making no approach at all!**





The third step in the Evangelism Cycle is to cultivate the interest through Bible study.

When someone responds positively to spiritual seed, that interest needs to be cultivated by the Word of God. This is best accomplished through weekly personal Bible studies.



1 Peter 2:2



As newborn babes, **desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby**, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious



Acts 8:30–35



So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?” And he said, “**How can I, unless someone guides me?**” ...Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.





It is not preaching alone that must be done. **Far less preaching is needed.** More time should be devoted to patiently educating others, giving the hearers opportunity to express themselves. It is instruction that many need, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, and there a little.





This nurturing work is by far the most time-consuming, labor-intensive, and potentially disappointing phase of the growing cycle. Where soil preparation and seed sowing may take a day or two, cultivation requires continued effort over weeks or months. This is the greatest need in soul-winning today.





The fourth step in the Evangelism Cycle is harvesting the crop by decisions for baptism.

After cultivating the interest with Bible studies, it is time to lead those embracing the truth to make decisions for baptism. Decisions for Christ are most often made in personal Bible studies or public evangelistic meetings followed by a baptismal preparation class.



Psalm 126:5, 6



Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. He who continually goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.





The salvation of sinners requires earnest, personal labor. We are to bear to them the word of life, not to wait for them to come to us. With personal piety and a consistent course of life our earnest heart-felt appeals will be, through God, as sharp arrows of the Almighty to pierce the sin-hardened heart, as sharp sickles to reap a precious harvest for the heavenly garner.





Crops never harvest themselves.





The fifth step in the Evangelism Cycle is preserving new members through a practical discipleship course.

After baptism, new members should be led through a systematic discipleship plan.

It is here that the disciple is trained to make other disciples, thus adding to the growth of the church.



Isaiah 55:10, 11



“For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, **that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth;** It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.



John 4:14



“Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”



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December 3, 1908



It is an eternal law of Jehovah that he who accepts the truth is to make it his first work to proclaim the truth. But who is it that makes the burden of perishing sinners his own? Among God's people today there is a fearful lack of the sympathy that should be felt for souls unsaved. We talk of Christian missions, the sound of our voice is heard; but do we feel Christ's tender heart-longing for those outside the fold?






It is evident that all the sermons that have been preached have not developed a large class of self-denying workers. This subject is to be considered as involving the most serious results... The churches are withering up because they have failed to use their talents in diffusing light. Careful instruction should be given which will be as lessons from the Master, that all may put their light to practical use.





It is little wonder the retention rates of newly baptized church members is so poor. If the excitement of a public campaign fades and the truth has only been accepted in theory but not in practice... what else should we expect?





We need to embrace the full Cycle of Evangelism, both individually and corporately, to grow believers in the Word, making them genuine disciples of Jesus Christ.





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