

Mount Zion A.M.E. Church of New Brunswick, NJ
02/01/2026

By Paul T. Bennett Church School Superintendent

Enduring Beliefs of the Christian Faith

The Church and Its Teaching

The Christian Church

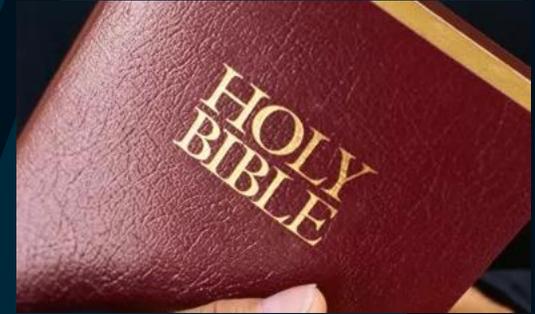
Mark 4:26-32

Ephesians 4:4-6, 11-18

*Anchor Text

2 TIMOTHY 3:16 (NIV)

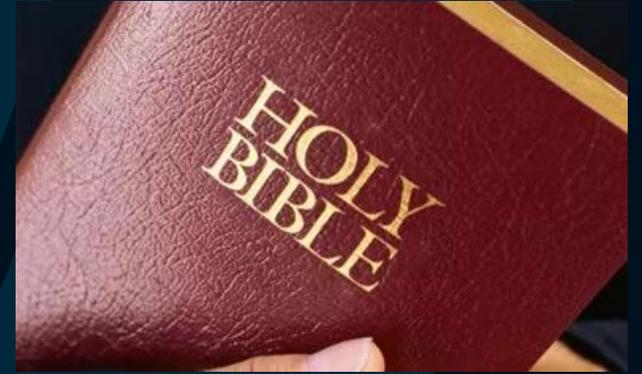
¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for **teaching**, **rebuking**, **correcting** and **training in righteousness**,



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Lesson Text

The Parable of the
Growing Seed



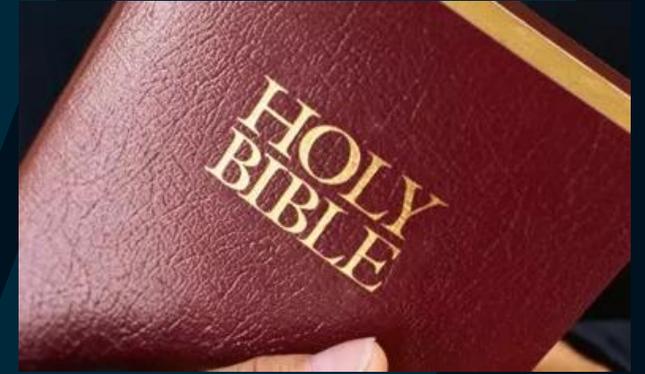
MARK 4:26 – 27 (NKJV)

²⁶ And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should [a]scatter seed on the ground, ²⁷ and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how.

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Lesson Text

The Parable of the
Growing Seed



MARK 4:28 (NKJV)

28 For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head.

29 But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.”

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COMMENTARY – SEED/HARVEST



The Seed is the Word of God. It is to be scattered liberally – regardless of which ground (**Mark 4:1:20**)

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COMMENTARY – SEED/HARVEST



The farmer is the one who offers the Word. It can be any one of us, but there is the vocation of preaching that God gives to the Church

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COMMENTARY – SEED/HARVEST



No one can 'make' someone saved or control who gets saved. The Word sprouts into whomever will listen and receive

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COMMENTARY – SEED/HARVEST

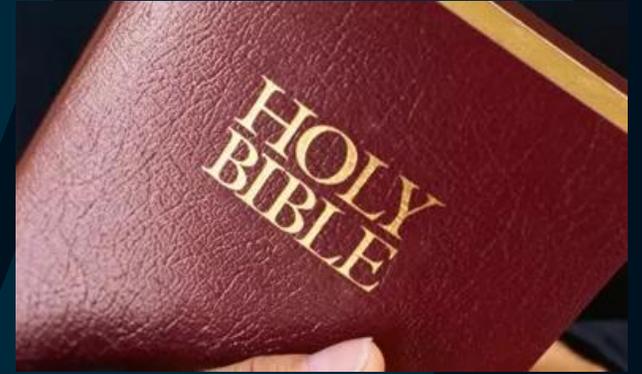


In God's time,
there will be a
harvest that will be
collected. The
farmer receives
what God grows

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Lesson Text

The Parable of the
Growing Seed



MARK 4:30 – 31 (NKJV)

³⁰ Then He said, "To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it?"

³¹ It is like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth;

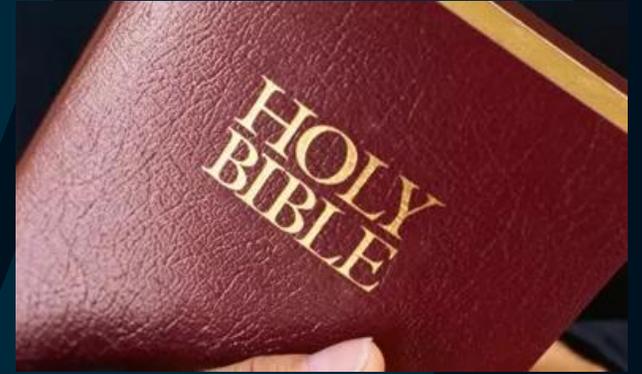
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Lesson Text

The Parable of the
Growing Seed

MARK 4:32 (NKJV)

32 but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade."



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COMMENTARY – GROWTH



We may diminish the significance of mustard seeds – just as we do the Gospel in its power to reach and to impact people. The message is simple but many miss it

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COMMENTARY – GROWTH



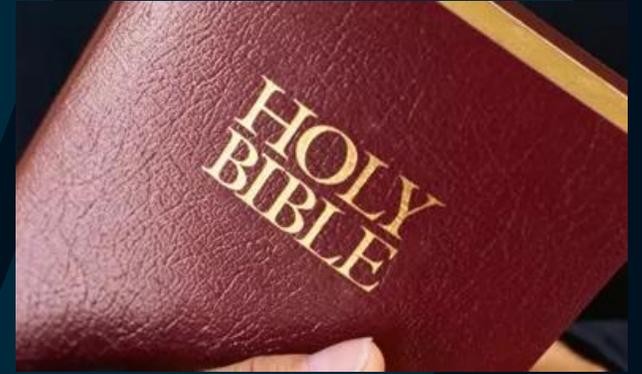
Mustard seed grows to a mighty plant.
The Church has innumerable followers

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Lesson Text

EPHESIANS 4:4 – 6 (NKJV)

⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in ^[a]you all.



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COMMENTARY – SECTARIANISM

- The Church has always had division (**1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:4**)
- It may be even moreso today with hundreds of sects and divided over worldly issues – e.g. politics
- The issue is that we do not focus on the essentials of the faith

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COMMENTARY – SECTARIANISM

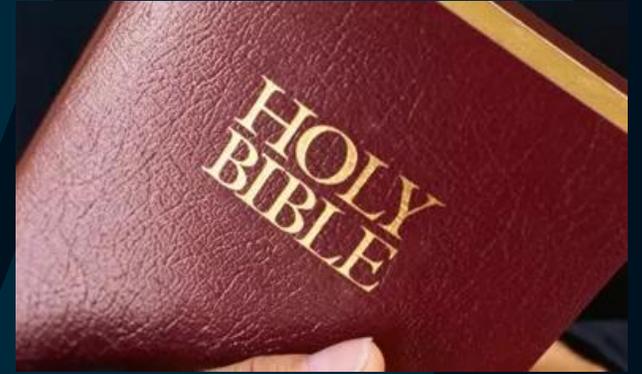
- The Apostle Paul more than anyone dealt with the issue of Church division – particularly between Jewish and Gentile Believers
- The issues were 'settled' at the Council in Jerusalem (**Acts 15**) but carnality still prevails today

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Lesson Text

EPHESIANS 4:11–12 (NKJV)

¹¹ And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the [a]edifying of the body of Christ,

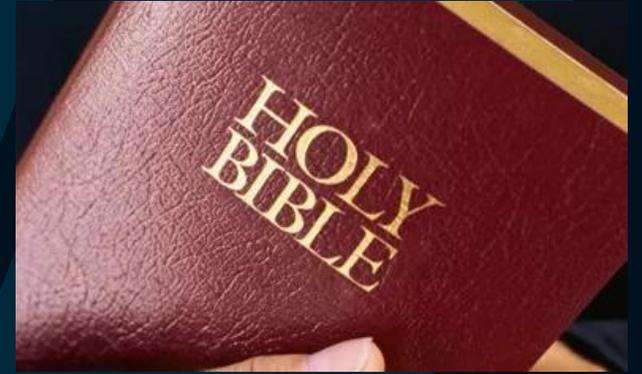


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Lesson Text

EPHESIANS 4:13 (NKJV)

¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

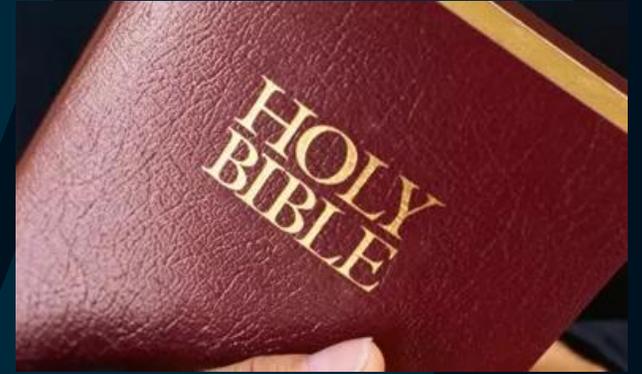


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Lesson Text

EPHESIANS 4:14 (NKJV)

14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,

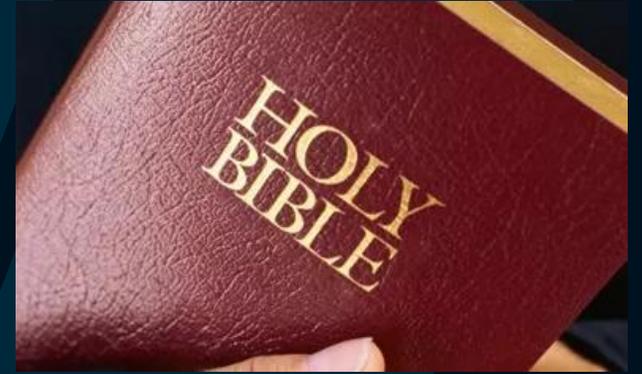


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Lesson Text

EPHESIANS 4:15-16a (NKJV)

¹⁵ but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies

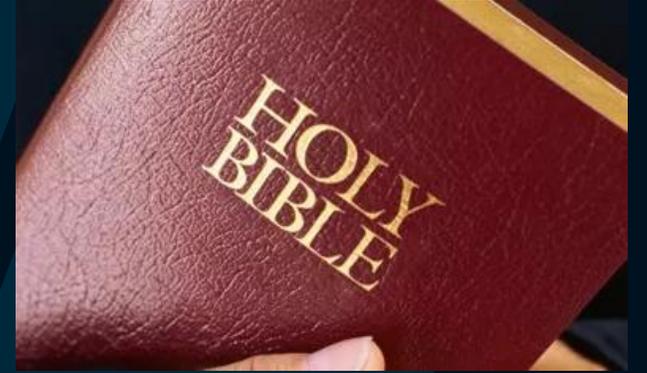


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Lesson Text

EPHESIANS 4:16b (NKJV)

¹⁶ according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.



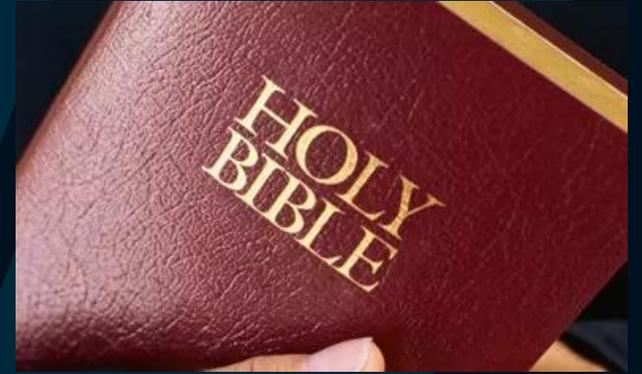
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Lesson Text

The New Man

EPHESIANS 4:17 (NKJV)

17 This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as ^[b]the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind,



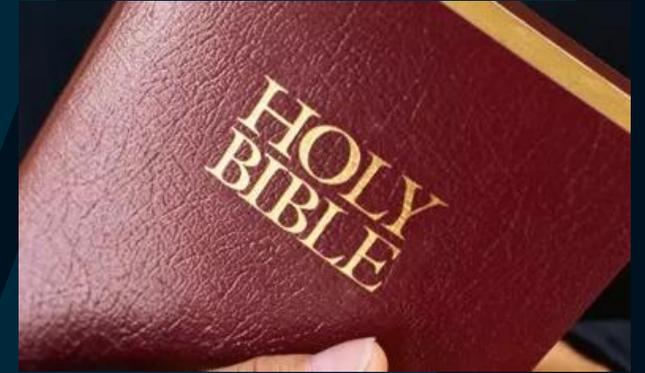
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Lesson Text

The New Man

EPHESIANS 4:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;



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COMMENTARY – CULTIVATION

- The first part of today's lesson deals with planting and growing
- The second part deals with cultivating – i.e. forming HOW the growth happens so that it is more fruitful and uniform

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COMMENTARY – CULTIVATION

- Once people are planted and begin to grow, God gives (as He wills (1 Corinthians 12:11)) people to teach and equip the Church to become more Christ-like, showing love to all

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COMMENTARY – CULTIVATION

- The Church should also prepare us to give a defense of our faith and to discern truth from error – true faith from religious dogma and to reach an increasing skeptical world

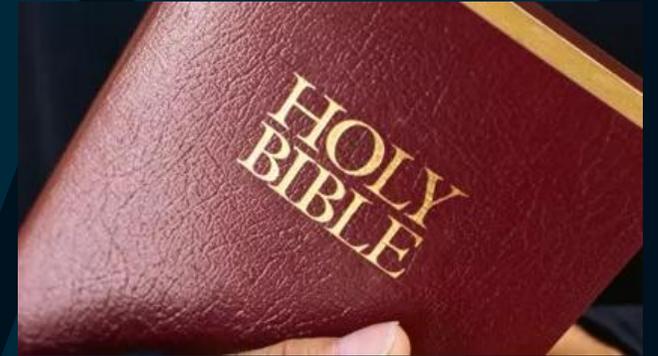
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COMMENTARY – CULTIVATION

- That will be harder to do IF we remain carnal, secular and divisive.
- The world will know us by how we love each other (**John 13:35**) and how we accept differences (**Romans 14**)

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Scripture References



1 CORINTHIANS 1:10-17;
1 CORINTHIANS 3
DIVISION, CARNALITY

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Church School Creed

Our Church School must grow & grow
And we must help to make it so
Every member a Christian
Every Christian a worker
Every worker trained
A worker that will not be ashamed
This we ask in Jesus' name

-AMEN

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Church School Benediction

We have come

We have studied

We have learned

So until our next coming together

To study God's word

May His rich blessings reside with you

And may His Grace be eternally yours

-AMEN