

Sermon – Like a Mustard Seed

Preached March 6, Cloverdale Baptist Church

Matthew 13:31-32

³¹ Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: ³² Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

As we look at this parable let's first ask the question, what is meant by "The Kingdom of Heaven"?

I asked two classes I teach what they thought and received the following answers:

- The Holy Spirit, the super natural, Jesus, His promises, Heaven over earth, where God dwells, dominion, authority
- I liked the idea of the Kingdom being where God dwells. Where does God live, reference Isaiah 57:15.

These are good answers; some other theologians and commentaries said:

- **A process:** a course of events where God begins to govern as King.
- Some relate it to the growth and state of the church.
- Similar to the term the Kingdom of God where He begins to have control of your life.
- You can Google and research this yourself but in line with God's plan as revealed through the Feasts, I like the idea of the Kingdom as a process with an expected end of greatness. This fits very well into my understanding of scriptures.

So, since there are different interpretations around this parable, let's approach this from what we currently know since these parables have a prophetic application.

1. The church, the kingdom has humble beginnings. Mustard seed start. Israel has a humble start. Jesus Christ has a very humble start born to a poor family. The disciples have a humble start.
2. The Man (Christ) sows this humble seed into his field. The disciples are planted into this field.
3. The church has grown and the Gospel preached through these humble beginnings. It took some time, just as the growth of mustard seeds...but it has grown.
 - a. Christianity was made the official religion of the Roman Empire in 380.
 - b. Christianity is the largest religious group in the world in 2021 (31.2%).
4. Three of the world's major religions are linked to each other.

But the application of the mustard seed story is not just limited to the church...the Kingdom of Heaven is among us and in you. Does God have dominion and authority over your life? That is the Kingdom in you.

What is a mustard seed?

- 1-2 millimeters in size.....very small.
- The bush can grow upwards to 20-30 feet.
- The tiny mustard seed holds the potential
 - What starts out small (our faith), can grow significantly and be used greatly.
 - Faith that starts small but reaches out to many.
- Can spread quickly into a large bushy plant.
- Seed is used as one of the most popular herbs and ingredients even today.

The Kingdom of Heaven in operation today or in current state can be compared to a single mustard seed. Very small and insignificant in the natural. Nothing special about it and can be easily overlooked and blown away.

However, the Kingdom will not stay like this but instead is designed to grow and expand into something great and very significant. From humble beginnings, it will grow to be great.

Mustard Trees

- Have an irregular shape, being just as wide as they are tall.
- Shrub's branches are very low to the ground.
- It blooms.
- Can grow tall without much water; produces a sweet fruit.
- Note: typically, mustard seeds don't grow into a tree as we know it.

Application of the parable.

Refer to other scriptures on how God takes the least and insignificant to produce greatness.

- Deuteronomy 7:7-9 – He chose Israel the least and fewest of all nations; Chose David out of all his other brothers; John 6:9 – uses a child's small lunch.

Personnel Application:

- Humbly submit to God and recognize your need for Him.
- Plant ourselves in His field. Bury the past sins and failures and plant the seed of the Gospel.
- Place our faith and hope that God can take our simple offering and turn it into something great and marvelous for the Kingdom.
- If He did it for the Children of Israel, if He did it for David, if He did for the disciples, His plan is to also do this for us. The true application for us today is that God wants to do something great in our lives. Don't discount your value because it seems insignificant today.

Points – only takes one seed, not many.

It works from the inside out

It is about control, let Him reign.

Follow the process

It doesn't end here, we have the blessed assurance that His best is in front of us and His plan for us is to make a significant contribution to the Kingdom.

Question: Can this church become great? Yes, with a mustard seed of faith. It might not look like we expected or planned, but it can be great.