

Gospel of Matthew “Mustard, Leaven, and Life”
Matthew 13:31-35
June 4, 2023

Matthew 13:31-35

31 He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. 32 It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

33 He told them another parable. “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened.”

34 All these things Jesus said to the crowds in parables; indeed, he said nothing to them without a parable. 35 This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet:[e]
“I will open my mouth in parables;

I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world.”

Mark 4:26-29

26 And he said, “The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground.

27 He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. 28 The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. 29 But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.”

The seed and the farmer are doing the same thing.

The most important of the two is the seed.

Joel 3:13

Swing the sickle, for the harvest is ripe.

Powerful things do not always have great beginnings.

Cedar trees of Lebanon.

Ezekiel 17:23

On the high mountain of Israel I will plant it, that it may bring forth boughs and bear fruit and become a stately cedar. And birds of every kind will nest under it; they will nest in the shade of its branches.

“With its pungent taste and fiery effect, mustard is extremely beneficial for health. It grows entirely wild, though it is improved by being transplanted: but on the other hand, when it has once been sown, it is scarcely possible to get the place free of it, as the seed when it falls germinates at once.”

- Pliny

The Kingdom, humble and unimpressive as it begins, will leaven and touch the whole world.

Daniel 4:10-12

10 The visions of my head as I lay in bed were these: I saw, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great. 11 The tree grew and became strong, and its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth. 12 Its leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, and the birds of the heavens lived in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it.

Being a Christian is to have the foundation, below the surface, changed and moved.

Grow Group Discussion Questions

- What did God say to you during our Sunday gathering?
- As you think about your spiritual growth, when has it been more like a big event and when has it been slow progress over time?
- Have you experienced growth connected to knowing and applying God's word? Discuss how Mark 4:26-29 places the power in the seed and not necessarily the worker. What is the role of the worker?
- Why is it reassuring that God intends the kingdom to grow slowly and surely? How might this adjust our perspective when we are looking to see growth and change?
- How is the parable of the mustard seed and it being an unlikely thing for God to use an encouragement to you?
- Consider the idea that a Christian grows. What area is God growing and shaping in you currently?
- How can your Grow group be an encouragement this week in the light of this teaching?