



THE PARABLES OF JESUS

THE MUSTARD SEED

Before Life Group

Read [Mark 4:30-32](#)

In Mark 4 Jesus tells four parables back to back. Within each parable, there are themes woven throughout the fabric, tying them all together. First is the imagery of the Kingdom of God which most would understand to be an infinitely powerful Kingdom. Even in our day, we read through the biblical imagery and see the vastness and superior nature of the Kingdom of God. Yet, where our own preconceived notions fall short is in the nature of what brings about the Kingdom of God. For example, we would not expect that the Kingdom is brought about by something that would at first seem so inconsequential—a mustard seed.

Anyone who has worked with mustard seeds understands their potency. While they are incredibly small, the potential inside of them is vast. The seed remains deceptively small for something whose impact is exponentially large. The same is true for the Kingdom of God. Some may choose to dismiss the Kingdom of God as small or inconsequential, yet there is a profound and deep power within the small acts that serve to grow the Kingdom.

A mustard seed grows quickly and becomes very large. The large branches of the tree provide shelter and comfort to animals. Likewise, there is comfort in the Kingdom of God that comes from its expansion. Creation enjoys the presence of the Kingdom of God on earth and can seek refuge and shelter in its growth and expansion. While God may use our hands to plant the seeds, it is ultimately for our own provision and our protection.

Safety In The Kingdom

As Jesus discusses the parable of the mustard seed, He describes the effect that the Kingdom of God has on the world. As the seed germinates into the great plant that it is, its growth provides shade and protection from the elements of the world, a place to rest that blocks the sun's intense heat. The spiritual realm is no different, and we too are intended to have our safety and rest in the Kingdom of God.

It is no secret that the world can beat a person down. With a culture that is openly hostile to the people of God, one might feel as if there is no place of safety to hide. In spite of this onslaught of criticism and the derision of the Christian faith, it could seem that nothing and no one is safe from the challenge of those whose are against the one true God. Yet, even amidst this contentious cultural shift that openly resists Christianity, there is safety and rest in the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God is expansive and larger than we can imagine from what small portions we see at times. In putting our faith in Jesus Christ, we join together with the family of Christ. Through Christ's work on the cross,

sin and death were defeated and nothing the world throws at us will be able to defeat us. Christ reigns victorious over all. This is the core of our rest in the Kingdom of God. The things we experience here on earth will fade away. There will be no pain, sickness or hurt in the Kingdom of God, only a profound peace that comes from sitting in the shade of God's presence.

Furthermore, we, as the family of God, are here to support one another through the elements and pains of the world. There is safety in the presence of God and safety in His reach through the people of God. When a Christian is feeling lonely, she can find family within the church. When a Christian faces sin and temptation, the church is there to uphold him in times of weakness. No matter our church background, history, or differences, we all share the commonality of being a child of God and a member of the body of Christ. Every time a person comes to faith in Jesus Christ, the Kingdom of God grows even larger.

A Grand Kingdom In Little Actions

Our culture loves the grand and great story of magnanimous faith and overcoming great odds. We love to hear the stories of the individuals who overcame the tragic results of terrible sins. Furthermore, we ask that God would use us to impact those around us, and nations and people groups. Do we crave opportunities and earnestly seek God for them to manifest in our lives?

At some point or another, many of us have aspired to have the faith of Billy Graham and desired to have the impact that he had on the world. God used countless people to pour into the young Billy Graham during his formative years. They were stirred to share the Gospel with the young man whom God had chosen to massively impact the world. This is the posture in which we must treat our daily tasks—as if the hand of God is reaching through our own hands to others. Our actions, however insignificant they may feel, have the potential through God's divine glory to leave a great and lasting impact on the world around us...beyond what we ever could imagine.

Therefore, do not neglect the little things as having the same spiritual importance as the larger. Each are things we are called to by God. Some of the most impacting moments in my life sound so inconsequential when I describe them to people, but these encounters jolted my life and steered me toward a committed and fuller relationship with Jesus Christ. This is the impact of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Discussion Questions

Read [Mark 4:30-32](#)

1. What has been the hardest challenge in representing your faith to the world around you? Why has this been particularly difficult? What did you do to overcome this challenge?
2. How do animals find rest in the shade of the mustard tree? How do you and I find rest in the Kingdom of God?
3. What are some of the things that have had profound impact on your spiritual journey? Overall, have they tended to be large events or the invitation and care from a friend?
4. In which area in your life have you been most affected by the body of Christ supporting one another? What opportunities do you have to support the body of Christ this week?
5. How does the growth of a mustard seed into a large tree display the power and glory of God? What does this say about the might of God and His ability to work in difficult situations?



6. Why do we tend to be enticed by bigger life events—the once in a lifetime encounter—and neglect the little moments in our day-to-day walk with God? Which takes more faith?
 7. How can we represent the Kingdom of God to the world around us? What are some of the risks in doing this? What are the benefits of doing this?
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About the Author.

Pastor Daniel Burton lives in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida. In May 2015, Daniel graduated from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary with his Master of Divinity. It was here that he began to explore his passion for Theology and deeper exploration of the word of God. Daniel believes that, at its core, Theology should be fun. Check out more of his work at <http://thegospeloutpost.com>

