

“Planting the Seed”

Mark 4: 26-32
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Jesus makes the invisible, visible

Parables were stories which Jesus told using common ordinary items that people saw and experienced in their daily lives. Jesus would talk about birds, flowers, water, bread, etcetera in order to describe concepts the people could not see with their eyes. Today, in our scripture, we have Jesus describing the “Kingdom of God” in which Jesus gave word pictures to help people visualize what the Kingdom was going to be like.

The miracle of it all:

²⁶ He also said, “The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, ²⁷ and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how.” Does anyone ask why a seed grows or by what power it grows? The whole process of growth is awesome when you come to think about it. These reflections can naturally draw one into giving thanks to God!

The tiny mustard seed versus the big mustard bush:

The mustard seed is around the size of a pinhead. Jesus gave the example of a mustard seed because everyone knew what that was. People could easily relate and understand Jesus’ example. The mustard plant can grow eight to ten feet high and will take over whatever is in its path. It becomes so strong that one would need a machete or a chain saw to remove it. Its branches are similar in size to a man’s arm. The mustard plant is one of the hardiest plants on earth. Mustard is used to provide flavouring for food; the leaves are edible; and it also has medicinal properties. It is not the most attractive plant, but is a strong, tenacious plant which spreads readily wherever it is planted.

³⁰ He also said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? ³¹ It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; ³² yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”

What is the lesson here?

Jesus is explaining that the small mustard seed has miraculous power within it. Similar to how this small mustard seed has the potential to become a very large plant, acts of kindness and love, or even a thought put into action is planting the seed of faith which grows. We call ‘planting the seed’ as a metaphor for sharing with others through our

words and our deeds about Jesus' love. When we are faithful in doing this, we are empowered by God to make a difference in growing the Kingdom of God and also in taking part in being transformed (ourselves) into faithful disciples of Christ!

One could say that the Kingdom of God is like a small seed within our hearts which takes root and every time we reach out in a word of encouragement, visiting those who are sick or those who are in prison (Matthew 25), the seed is planted and it continues to grow strong within us through the power of the Holy Spirit!

The Mustard seed is a tenacious seed and cannot be easily killed. Similarly, though we may feel small and feel our faith in Christ is inadequate, Jesus teaches that if we trust God by planting the seed he will build on that faith to advance the Kingdom of God. God can use even a small seed of faith to accomplish great things.

God looks at things differently than we do.

What we see as insignificant and not amounting to much, God sees as miraculous and beautiful in his Kingdom!

God came down in His Son Jesus as a vulnerable, insignificant nobody and he changed the world. As believers, we are one with Christ and therefore engaged for his Kingdom work to bring hope to the world. This is what God has done and continues to do through us in our daily lives.

God sees the potential in you. God knows you more than you know yourself. You may feel insignificant among the multitudes of people who live on the earth. But, through Jesus Christ, we are assured that God knows you (John 10: 27) and is living in you (I Corinthians 6: 19) and empowers you through the presence of the Holy Spirit (Acts 4: 31).

How can we plant the seed of God's Kingdom of love when we have experienced so little love in our life?

"We choose love by taking small steps of love every time there is an opportunity. A smile, a handshake, a word of encouragement, a phone call, a card, an embrace, a kind greeting, a gesture of support, a moment of attention, a helping hand, a present, a financial contribution, a visit ... all these are little steps toward love. Each step is like a candle burning in the night. It does not take the darkness away, but it guides us through the darkness. When we look back after many small steps of love, we will discover that we have made a long and beautiful journey". – (Henri Nouwen – Henri Nouwen Society Daily Meditation.).

God is love. When we live our daily lives out of that love, we are in line with the greatest power of the universe – that power in Jesus which ultimately defeated sin, hate, injustice and death. Let's plant the seed and see it grow in others and in us! Amen.