

Grace Wins
Luke 13:18-21

Parables illustrations from everyday life that illustrate eternal truths. In our text, Jesus takes a “mustard seed” and a “loaf of bread” and teaches us something about His Kingdom; the King’s grace in our lives.

I. Entrance into the Kingdom starts with something small – *The Parable of the Mustard Seed.*

When you come to faith in Christ is “faith like a mustard seed” (Matt. 17:20). Here, Jesus describes the Kingdom of God as “a mustard seed.” The mustard seed was a very small seed of the mustard plant that could grow into the size of a tree. The branches of the mustard tree were used as ancient tooth brushes, with the stripped bark having natural antibacterial characteristics that cleaned teeth.

A. God moves in reverse to the way the world works.

God’s work almost always begins in obscurity, with what appear to be insignificant, small things. Bigger is not always better. We are all impressed with big things, but God begins with the little. God is not as interested in the message you preach publicly, as the message you give privately.

B. When God begins to move, the growth continues.

Like the grain of mustard seed sown in the ground, its growth is almost unobservable, but steady. As the full grown mustard seed is the greatest and largest of all herbs, so the work of grace within you, shall be immeasurably great and large in influence – (**Psalm 80:8-11**).

C. God will eventually reign supreme in my life as Lord.

The seed becomes a tree. The small becomes great. The work of grace wins in the absolute end. “He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion to the day of Christ (Phil. 1:7).

D. What is true of you in microcosm is true of God’s Kingdom universal.

The mustard seed parable is prophetic. “As the mustard plant grows to be the greatest of all herbs, so shall my church grow to be the greatest of all kingdoms.” It began to grow on the day of Pentecost when 3000 were born into the Kingdom on that day. The Church has continued to grow unto this day, when the evangelical Christians in China number more than U.S. population.

II. Advancement in the Kingdom occurs by a transformation within – *The Parable of the Leaven*

Contrary to Constantine who saw the kingdom by decree, and in the reverse to religion which tries to convert through consent to creeds; the Kingdom of God grows through a transformation of hearts.

Leaven: 1. A substance, typically yeast, that is added to dough to make it ferment and rise.

2. A pervasive influence that modifies something or transforms it for the better.

“They acted as an intellectual leaven to the warriors who dominated the city.”

A. So the Word of God, hidden in the hearts of God’s people, transforms from the inside out.

“For God’s Word is living and active; judging the thoughts and intent of the heart” (Heb. 4:12).

It is the Word of God taken and embedded by the Spirit of God that transforms my life.

B. The person outside the influence of God’s Word will stay flat and unaffected.

Unleavened bread never experiences the power of internal transformation. So, too, the one who avoids the use of God’s Word is one who never experiences the transformation of God.

III. It’s not our responsibility to judge those in the Kingdom who aren’t of the Kingdom.

In Scripture “fowls of the air” represent the enemy or the enemies of God. When Abraham met God and entered into covenant, he had to guard the sacrifice from the fowls of the air (see Gen. 15:11). In this text we have “birds” resting in the mustard tree. It’s not our responsibility to drive the fowls away. The visible church is composed of the lost and the saved; concentrate on yourself and the growth you have in Christ, and everyone else will be “raised up” by the grace within you. Grace wins.