

## One Seed

August 18, 2019

### Luke 13:18-19

18 He said therefore, "What is the kingdom of God like? And to what should I compare it? 19 It is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in the garden; it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches."

Jesus continues his teaching ministry giving multiple lessons, and very valuable lessons, that deal with God, heaven, and care for other human beings. Today's Scripture is a parable where Jesus addresses the concept of heaven. I identify it as a concept because he is unable to give us a concise description that people can understand. The reason for this is because we do not have a frame of reference to associate the kingdom of heaven.

I will attempt to explain it this way. I am legally blind in one eye. So, I have had trouble playing sports. The problem is depth perception. Trying harder, practice, and coaching did not help at all. The only sport that I could participate in was track. I was good enough to be on the track team but not good enough to win. Well, there are pictures that have a hidden image in them. If you look at it carefully you can see the hidden image. The way it works is that each eye sees from a slightly different angle. So, it doesn't work for me. It is physically impossible. I cannot see it no matter how hard I try. I cannot go to 3D movies either. Well, Jesus explains heaven as something that we cannot physically see. Since we cannot see it, there is no picture or frame of reference that we can associate to it.

The prophet Isaiah stated that he could find nothing which he could liken to God. What Jesus does is he compares the kingdom of Heaven to a mustard seed and then yeast mixed in flour. Only Jesus can explain or give examples of what heaven is like. Jesus does not describe the kingdom of heaven as a great cedar tree as did some of the Old Testament prophets. So, his emphasis is not on the magnificence of heaven but on the significance of the growth from a very tiny beginning.

When you think about a kingdom what is it that you think about? The first image that came to my mind was Great Britain. I also associate with movies about Alfred the Great and the Viking Uhtred, of Babbenberg. Children might think of the Magic Kingdom in Disney World. Probably on the minds of Jesus' listeners is the mighty empire of Rome. It is not technically a kingdom but it is easy to associate it with one. Maybe they think of the Assyrian and Babylonian empires that destroyed their ancestors and sent them into Exile. For sure they would be familiar with Alexander the Great who conquered the whole region. But what they wanted, hoped for, and prayed for, was the kingdom of Israel to be like it was in its glory days with King David. In fact that is the vision they had of the promised Messiah. That he would free them from Romans and reinstate the Kingdom to its former glory. That's the picture that they want Jesus to paint for them; a picture of Israel as a great kingdom with a victorious king.

Jesus portrays a very different image. This kingdom that Jesus describes is not a political kingdom and it is not a mighty military kingdom. The kingdom of heaven has a different set of values and a different set of rules with a much different objective. Jesus didn't even say it would be in this world but of this world.

The contemporary lesson for us is what you can do with very little. This is a good lesson for the small church because it shows what you can do with a humble few. I once read a story about a man that lived by the lessons that we learn from Jesus. The story cited **Galatians 6:10** "Whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all." This is similar to the golden rule "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Well, there was this poor family.

The husband and father was unemployed when their furnace failed during a hard winter. They had no money for the repairs. The Christian bought parts, installed them, and got the furnace working. What he actually did was more than provide for the struggling family. He also demonstrated the love of Christ. The end result was that eventually the unemployed husband and father began attending church. In time he ended up being a minister. It all started with planting one seed. The basic root core of evangelism is you planting one seed. One seed at a time out in the community, being a Christian, doing acts of kindness. One seed at a time, representing Christ. One seed at a time, giving your testimony. It is all done in the name of the Lord. The mustard seed is very, very small seed. I read somewhere that it takes over 700 seeds to make a gram. From that tiny seed the mustard plant grows to eight or nine feet.

Plant your seeds of faith wherever you are in your daily life. Show people around you the love of Christ at work within you. Let them see the joy of the Lord through you. Tell others about your faith. It only takes one seed.