

TITLE AND NUMBER: 32. The Parable of the mustard seed

REFERENCE AND KEY VERSE(S): Mark 4:30-34



Again [Jesus] said, "What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? "It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest seed you plant in the ground. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds of the air can perch in its shade." (v.31-32)

LOOKING FURTHER: Matthew 13:31-32; Luke 13:18-19; Matthew 4:23-25

What does this Bible passage tell us?

The parable of the mustard seed is one of several parables which Jesus uses to describe the Kingdom of God. A parable is a story about everyday things which has a deeper, spiritual meaning. We can perhaps imagine Jesus picking one of these tiny seeds, barely visible to the crowds, from a plant growing nearby and holding it up between His fingers. He goes on to say that, when planted, this tiny seed can grow into a plant so big that the birds can perch on its branches.

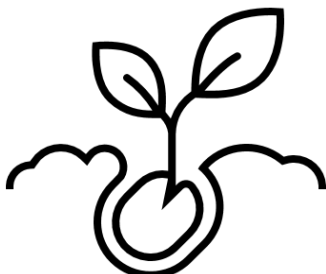
I remember, as a child, placing tiny mustard and cress seeds on wet paper in a saucer and then watering and looking at them often as they split open and produced roots and shoots. They were not big enough for birds to perch on, but certainly many times bigger than the original seeds. Jesus says the Kingdom of God is like this. At the time He was speaking, there were only a few people following Jesus, but they planted the seeds by telling others. Today, God works in people's hearts growing His Kingdom of justice, peace, compassion, kindness and mercy.

God's Kingdom is therefore not just something we can look forward to for the future, although it is that, but it is for here and now. When we become followers of Jesus, we are part of His Kingdom wherever we are. God's Kingdom is within your prison and outside it, too. And you can help it grow like the mustard seed, not just by what you say but by what you do.

Reflections:

- Imagine yourself watching Jesus holding up the mustard seed and listening to Him talking about the Kingdom of God.
- Now imagine Jesus' followers at work in the world today, helping God's Kingdom to grow.
- How do you see yourself as part of that Kingdom?
- Ask God whether there is anything He would like you to do to help the growth of the Kingdom. But don't be disheartened if you don't hear an answer immediately. God will answer in His time.

Write or draw something you read in this Bible Study that stood out to you.



Do you have any questions about this week's Bible Study?



How does this week's message apply to your life?



What can we learn about God from this week's passage?



What would you like to ask God this week?



What have you seen God do in response to your prayers this week?

