

MARK 4 30-32 THE MUSTARD SEED

INTRO/REVIEW: The growth of God in the soul of man.

- The previous parable showed us the work of God in the soul of man,
- While the mustard seed parable may give a quick glimpse of that, but more so the progress and spreading of Christianity, and the church in the world.
- Here we see the growth of the purpose of God in the world realized through the church.
- As John Newton wrote, "glorious things of thee are spoken, Zion city of our God." (PS 87:3)
- The kingdom of God here means the visible kingdom of Christ established in the world and also the invisible kingdom erected in the souls of men, those places where He is obeyed as King.
- An apt verse introduction of this parable may be found in Zech. 4"10; do not despise the day of small beginnings.

Read: Mark 4:30-32.

- The first thing I notice is the inclusiveness of Christ. (Vs. 30)
- How Jesus is willing to bring us and draw us into His life, His work, His Kingdom.
- How He is content and willing to work through His Spirit inspired people to achieve His eternal purpose.
- To draw us unto Himself and His mission. He is a drawing Savior.
 - SS. 1:4; Draw me after you and let us run together.
 - Mt. 11:28 "Come unto me all ye..."
 - Jer. 31:3; The LORD has appeared ^[a]of old to me, *saying*: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.

THE MUSTARD SEED AND ITS GROWTH:

- the mustard seed is the smallest of agricultural seeds and the parable here is about the size of the seed in comparison to the expansive growth of the seed once germinated and its growth to maturity.
- There are reports that the plant grows as high as 15 feet in height and strong enough for a man to climb and birds to nest in its branches.
- Jesus twice used the picture of the mustard see to emphasize the power of even a small spark of faith. (Mt. 17:20, Lk. 17:6)
- The mustard seeds growth is likened unto the kingdom of God, made up of true members, born of the Spirit of God.
- The wild birds who tent in the branches are not part of this kingdom, they stay only temporarily in the branches as birds do.
- These birds are those in general who find the church beneficial to them and enjoy its wholesome safety and influence in the world and life.

CHRIST AND HIS PURPOSE; THE FRUITFUL VINE: JN. 15:1 I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser

- **Jesus Himself was the Seed of the Father.**
 - **Jn. 12:23-32**
- **When Jesus was given by the Father He was but a small unnoticed thing, a small seed, a baby born in the unimportant village of Bethlehem in a livestock shelter.**
- **Born into a carpentry family, working manual labor with His hands, laboring unnoticed for 30 years.**
- **In ministry, though He touched 1000s of lives, His loyal followers were few.**
- **In death He was attended by again a few faithful women and perhaps only one disciple, but the whole world would soon take notice of this humble Nazarene.**

IN THE SOUL:

- **What appears in our souls at the new birth seems to be a small weak thing a weak faith like a babe.**
- **But this seemingly small faith, this small inexperienced knowledge will by the grace of God grow.**
- **And grow to such measure it will fill the whole of man's soul and from there affect his manner of life, making the man of God invincible.**
 - **Eph. 1:15-19, 4:14-16**
 - **2 Thess. 1:3; We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other,**
- **Though the life of God may seem to be in the soul a small athing, its divine destiny is to grow and permeate the whole garden of the soul. Affecting and being prominent in every area of our lives.**

IN THE WORLD THROUGH THE CHURCH:

- **The Old Testament kingdom was exclusive to Israel, and the Jews only.**
- **But the new Testament kingdom spreads wide and is inclusive to all people groups as Jesus proclaimed, "God so loved the world."**
- **The church when it was born was but a small weak insignificant thing.**
- **Humanly led by 11 unremarkable, simple men and a few women followers.**
- **They were surrounded by the earthly unequaled power of the Roman Empire, the unequaled wisdom of the Greeks, and the unequaled zealousness of religious Israel. How could they survive?.... "BUT GOD!"**
- **Then 50 days later there were 120 gathered together, then His promised Comforter came and there was gathered into the Church 3000 souls. (Acts 2:41)**
- **Then there were souls added to the church daily, (Acts 2:47)**

- Then e read in (Acts 4:4) another 5000 men were added, how many women we do not know.
- And yet again we read in Acts 5:14 "And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women."
 - Isa. 11:9b, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea.
- And let us look ahead with me to the glorious culmination of souls before the throne,
 - **Rev. 7:9;**
 - Rev. 15:11; Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"
- The history of the church is filled with great illustrations of this.
- Look what sprang from insignificant, unheard of men such as Luther and Calvin.
- John Wesley and George Whitefield,
- Consider insignificant William Carey, a small unnoticed seed, but when he died after 40 years of serving Christ in India, under his ministry hundreds of converts were added to the church, 10000 children were give Christian education and the scriptures were translated into 27 languages.
- 20 years before Hudson Taylor arrived in China there were only 6 known converts in all of China and workers in only a few coastal cities.
- But before his death, there were missionaries in every province in China and the Christians numbered well over 100,000.
- How about J. O. Fraser, who had labored for years and had seen 10s of thousands come to faith in Christ before his death at age 52 in Sept of 1938.
- Not too long after his death and the fall of China to communism it is reported that the Lisu Christians fled the mountain ranges of China for Burma and Thailand in numbers that were reported to by as high as 70,000.
- And a survey in the year 2000 it was estimated that there were between 100 -200,000 Lisu Christians and in fact they are the only tribalx or peoples group in all of China who are listed as Christians.
- Charles Spurgeon:
 - His sermons filled 63+ volumes which is equal to the 27 volume of Encyclopedia Britannica.
- It is the largest set of books produced by any author in the history of Christianity.
- His sermons sold approximately 25,000 copies per week and were translated into 20 languages, then sent around the world in news papers.
- One man ordered *one million* copies of one sermon of Spurgeon and then had it distributed to the entire continent.
- He preached 600+ times before he was 20 years old.

- He read 6 books each week in order to prepare for his sermons and to sharpen his mind.
- He read John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* over 100 times.
- He saw over 14,400 people added to his church during his ministry.
- He founded a pastors' college.
- He trained approximately 900 men for the ministry.
- He founded an orphanage.
- He produced more than 140 books.
- There are more books by Spurgeon currently in print than any other Christian author.
- He edited a magazine.
- He responded to 500+ letters each week.
- He often preached 10+ times each week.
- He had two sons who became pastors.
- And consider that he died at the age of 57, it becomes even more impressive. Spurgeon's son, Charles Jr., was not exaggerating when he once said of his father:
- Time would fail us to continue but what an example of the tiny insignificant mustard seed of a faithful life and its Sprit blessed multiplication.

CONCLUSION:

- The church, the little seed that could....
- The church the planting of Jesus
- And we are part of this parable, invited into the plan of God
- Let's make a difference... in our personal lives, in our families, in our church.
- **EPH. 3:20**