

The Mustard Seed

The three synoptic Gospels all carry the story of the mustard seed. We live in a culture that praises size. Big houses. Big screen TVs. Big automobiles. Big stadiums. Bigger is thought to be better.

Why do you think many of the kingdom parables involve the principle of sowing the seed (parable of the sower, the tares, mustard seed)?

The Mustard seed was considered to be the smallest of the garden seeds. Tiny. Insignificant. Unnoticed. Easy to overlook.



From such a tiny seed grew a large shrub—sometimes reaching ten to fifteen feet in height—large enough for birds to perch in its branches. The contrast between beginning and maturity is the heart of the parable.

This is how the kingdom began. It stood upon some lofty promises (Dan 2:44), but it was just a small band of nobodies that began the kingdom, led by an itinerant teacher from Nazareth, a nowhere place. It had very humble beginnings. The odds were against it.



Mustard seed

Watermelon seed

What odds were against it?

1 Corinthians 1:26-27 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; ²⁷ but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong,

- Does having “famous” people in the church give more credibility to it?
- God can do amazing things with ordinary people.

The Growth of the Kingdom: Acts

2:41 _____

16:5 _____

4:4 _____

17:4 _____

5:14 _____

17:6 _____

5:28 _____

17:12 _____

6:1 _____

6:7 _____

11:24 _____

12:25 _____

14:1 _____

Colossian 1:5b-6 a “the Gospel which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing...”

1:23b “...the hope of the Gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under Heaven”



“WITH JUST A MUSTARD SEED OF FAITH, YOU CAN MOVE MOUNTAINS.”

—JESUS, MATTHEW 17:20

Matthew 13:31-32

He presented another parable to them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; ³² and this is smaller than all *other seeds*, but when it is full grown, it is larger than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that THE BIRDS OF THE AIR come and NEST IN ITS BRANCHES.”

Mark 4:30-32

And He said, “How shall we picture the kingdom of God, or by what parable shall we present it? ³¹ *It is* like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the soil, though it is smaller than all the seeds that are upon the soil, ³² yet when it is sown, it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and forms large branches; so that THE BIRDS OF THE AIR can NEST UNDER ITS SHADE.”

Luke 13:18-19

So He was saying, “What is the kingdom of God like, and to what shall I compare it? ¹⁹ It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and threw into his own garden; and it grew and became a tree, and THE BIRDS OF THE AIR NESTED IN ITS BRANCHES.”

Without further explanation, what is this parable about?

Are there any differences in the three Gospel accounts of this parable?

As His disciples heard this, what should they have learned?

Is there a time when we can say that this parable was ‘fulfilled’?

Four take-away for us:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Zechariah asked, "Who has despised the day of small things?" (Zechariah 4:10).

We are often tempted to measure success by numbers, buildings, or public recognition. But God often begins with one person, one conversation, one act of faith, one seed planted in a heart.

- One invitation may _____
- One Bible study may _____ a family.
- One congregation may influence an _____
- One faithful Christian can leave a lasting _____

Small acts, when placed in God's hands, can produce enormous results. (Mt 10:42)