

Connect360: The Mysterious and Mighty Little Mustard Seed

December 12, 2024

- *Lesson 3 in the Connect360 unit "The reMARKable Journey Continues: The Gospel of Urgency" focuses on Mark 4:26-32.*

The kingdom of God starts small but becomes huge. We live in a culture that celebrates "bigness." We assume popularity and large crowds equates with quality and greatness of product. Sometimes it does, sometimes it doesn't.

In God's kingdom, you need to grow where God has planted you, serving faithfully. The living God working through you and your church is what matters in kingdom terms.

In this parable, Jesus focused on giving a picture of the kingdom of God. The mustard seed is really small. William Lane noted the kingdom is not likened to a mustard seed, but rather likened to what happens to the mustard seed, to what comes out of it. The kingdom of God was beginning small, but one day (as in the 20th and 21st centuries) it would encompass the world.

So, this parable is an encouraging message. It is not how small you are now that matters; it's the incredibly huge things God can make from your small beginnings. Jesus is contrasting small, seemingly unimpressive beginnings with surprising huge, unforeseen outcomes.

Don't get discouraged over your current situation. You have no idea what a big impact your life, or your church's life, might make on hundreds, or thousands, of people in eternity. With Jesus, small beginnings do not limit

huge outcomes. Faithfulness in the seemingly insignificant small things, might be growing a forest of spiritual redwoods in eternity.

Jesus' kingdom began as one person, as Jesus alone. Then Jesus called the 12 disciples and invested his life and teachings into them. After his crucifixion, there were only 120 believers (Acts 1:15), perhaps comparable to your church's size. On the day of Pentecost 3,000 more were baptized and added to the church, people from many nations and languages (Acts 2:41, 47). And the Lord was daily adding more to their number. Soon, Christianity conquered the Roman Empire, not through violence, but through God's many people serving God in small scenarios, embodying God's love and redemption.

In 2020, the estimated number of Christians in the world was 2.38 billion (see Pew Research). That doesn't include the countless millions of Christians over the last 2,000 years. The kingdom's growth from 120 to billions of people in the kingdom of God today, all started from Jesus. From Jesus, one seemingly insignificant seed that was despised and crushed by the world—Jesus, whom God raised from the dead, and who is now the King of kings and Lord of lords. This Jesus is now worshiped in nearly every country of the world.

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