

The Parables
May 15, 2016
Matthew 13:31-32, "Sowing Tiny Seeds"

Dismiss Children

Fellowship Break

Doug and Rebecca are here – they've brought a video for us, and Doug will be helping me apply this message with a report from Sinaloa in just a bit...

Turn to Matthew 13:30...

I distinctly remember being a young boy growing up in the forest in central CA...

- **... and picking up an acorn.**
- I was on a walk by myself.
- I had 3 sisters – this was a normal occasion.
- And I remember becoming fascinated, looking up and around at **the oak tree** from which it dropped.
- I was probably 8 or 9 years old, having one of my first long conversations with God.
- "You seriously can BURY this thing in the ground, and it eventually becomes this big tree? How? And WHY? Why does virtually EVERY living thing GROW from almost nothing?"
- I remember taking the acorn home, running in to Mom, saying "Isn't it amazing???"
 - And mom - true to form – stopped what she was doing and listened to me ramble on, mimicking my excitement in my discovery of God being so crazy awesome as a Creator.
- But somewhere along the way, my amazement faded into "normal"
 - "God is so amazing" statements morphed into, "Well, IF there's a God, that's just what God does" statements.
 - God forgive me.
 - Pray...

Mat 13:31 He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field.

Mat 13:32 It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

Before I get deeper, you need to know:

- There are literally dozens of interpretations of this parable from trustworthy scholars.
 - They get really wrapped up in the minutia:
 - There is confusion about "a grain of mustard seed"
 - There is debate about a mustard seed being "the smallest of all seeds" – because it's not.
 - There is further exasperation that **there is no such thing as a mustard TREE.**
 - This really throws scholars for a loop
 - Some suggest there must have been a change in the ecosystem, and that 2000 years ago mustard trees actually existed.
 - Others suggest maybe something was lost in translation.

- Others think maybe Jesus' culture called them trees, and found out later there were really just plants...
- I mention all this for two reasons:
 - 1) to remind you: **This is a PARABLE.**
 - 2) **The "tree" remark is on purpose.**

This parable has ONE meaning:

- **The seed is Jesus** (or perhaps more specifically, the good news of Jesus, Messiah)
- **The Tree is the impossible, supernaturally HUGE size of His (ever expanding) church, equipped and purposed for the world He loves to find rest in its branches.**

Let's start with the Seed.

- **The mustard seed itself is very tiny.**
 - It takes about 750 of them to make up a single gram.
 - 21,000 mustard seeds in an ounce.
- And the mustard seed is – by analogy, Jesus Himself.
 - But Kyle, Jesus is larger than life!
 - Yes, but not at the time of this parable.
 - And remember his extraordinary humble beginnings...
 - Jesus was born in the tiny town of Bethlehem in abject poverty.
 - In a barn.
 - Eventually his parents went on the run from authorities who – directed by Satan himself – wanted Jesus dead so badly, he had tens of thousands of babies killed in a losing effort.
 - He was reared in Galilee, and no one believed that a man of God could come from there, John 7:52.
 - He was raised in a Nazareth.
 - Can anything good come out of Nazareth?
 - His parentage was questioned, John 8:41 by His enemies.
 - He had no cultural standing or position.
 - He had no support from the religious leaders of the day.
 - His followers were, for the most part, the dregs of society.
 - His own people rejected Him.
 - The Romans eventually nailed Him to a cross.
 - **His dead body was buried.**

Let me take you back to that day 40 years ago in the forest...

- I remember being quite concerned for the acorn, when thinking of it being buried.
- The thought struck me: But won't it DIE?
- The profoundness of Jesus dying, but being raised by God to live forever – larger than life – was pretty powerful on my 8-yr-old brain.

Jesus would then appear to over 500 of his followers... (empty tomb)

- He then ascended into heaven, promising the coming power of His Holy Spirit
 - Saying, "Tell the world about me."
- And 10 days later, His Spirit came, and power with Him!
- 3000 were added!

- 5000 again were added after Peter's second sermon in Acts 3
- Paul would later be confronted by this same Jesus, and take His gospel to countless cities in the known world.
- Today, over 2 billion claim Christ as their Savior and Lord!
- **That ain't no "bush"! (big tree)**
 - It's not as though the Son of God (for whom and by whom all things were created), didn't know the difference between a bush and a tree.
 - If you'll allow that Jesus knew exactly what He was talking about, then I believe you'll open the door to the parable's primary meaning:
 - ***The Kingdom of Heaven starts with the smallest of the small, and grows into something so large it defies the natural order of things.***
- And His Kingdom is without end!!!
- And it all goes back to a perceived illegitimate, homeless baby **born in a barn.**

So here's the fun part:

- The word "Christian" is the Greek word **Christianos = "little Christ"**
 - **2 Corinthians 3:18, But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.**
 - **John 13:34, A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.**
 - **Colossians 3:13, bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.**

Doug and Rebecca Coult and their family are beautiful examples of "little Christs"

- Before I yield to Doug, **A twofold encouragement:**
 - **1) You were created to mimic the seed of Christ.**
 - You indeed were insignificant, lowly, DEAD... nothing to the world.
 - ***Dying, being buried is required for the seed to bring forth LIFE.***
 - ***And therefore, because of Christ in you as a result of TOTAL SURRENDER in faith and trust to Him, you are being transformed!***
 - And through you and your testimony of Jesus in your life, the seed expands into a **massive legacy** unimaginable in the natural order of things.
 - **2) Never view any human being as anything less than how God sees them: a seed with a massive legacy ahead of them.**
 - And YOU ARE COMMANDED to play part in encouraging them, feeding them with truth, grace and love... SOWING TINY SEEDS!
 - I ask God's forgiveness all the time for limiting people in His Kingdom based on my perception of them being tiny seeds.
 - It is with the tiniest of seeds that the largest results often come.
 - But Kyle, not all Christians have great legacies.
 - Exactly my point!
 - Consider your role in the lives of those around you.
 - The Bible says God gave teachers, shepherds, encouragers, servants, compassionate people to the body!
 - We exist in large part to recognize gifts, and encourage one another in them.

- ***And when the church fails in this, we see lonely, purposeless, depressed SAVED PEOPLE walking the planet, the church having WHIFFED in her job to build up, and the individual having a built-in excuse to live a visionless life.***
- ***Let's stop the insanity, and start sowing tiny seeds!!!***
 - As always, start at home!
 - Sowing = planting, watering, pruning, carefully loving to LIFE!
 - Raise up a child in the way He should go:
 - Recognize their Spiritual gifts, their passions, fruit, and equip them for the massive legacy God has planned for them, by His good pleasure.

Doug Coult is about to share what God is doing in Mexico, but first, [a video to kick that off](#).

- Talk about tiny seeds being planted and blooming!
- You will be blessed by his encouragement today!

Doug Share

Kyle call up Rebecca and Evie – pray for FLOW International Ministries in Mexico

Stuart and Tim available for prayer!

Call up Bill to close