THE MIGHTY MUSTARD SEED

 **DATE: 8/6/2017 SS**

**TEXT: Mark 4:30-34**

**INTRODUCTION**

As we come to this new text this morning …

We continue to see Jesus teaching in parables

**vs. 33, 34** tell us that parables would be our Lord's primary means of teaching His truth

***“And with many such parables spake He the Word unto them, as they were able to hear it” “But without a parable spake He not unto them: and when they were alone, He expounded all things to His disciples”***

We left off last time looking at the Parable of the Seed

The Lord compared the Kingdom of God to a Farmer sowing seed in his field

He used this to illustrate how the Sowing of Seed of the Word of God works in people’s hearts

As we begin our text this morning, we see Jesus making a comparison of the Kingdom of God

And He compares the Kingdom of God to a Mustard Seed

Now I’m sure the Disciples had their own ideas as to what the Kingdom of God should be like

But I don’t think it was a Mustard Seed

And I’m sure they were surprised when Jesus used it as His comparison

When Jesus began to speak, He didn't compare the Kingdom of God to the Great Kingdoms of David and his son Solomon

Jesus compared the Kingdom of God to a tiny mustard seed!

Jesus uses the image of something small to teach us about something larger than we can comprehend

It will be helpful to remember that the kingdom of God will have its ultimate fulfillment in the Millennium

There may be spiritual applications and parallels for the church today, but the kingdom by its very nature is yet to come

Let's look into the words of this parable and see the *lessons* Jesus wants to teach us about the Kingdom of God

As Jesus prepares to deliver another parable related to the kingdom

What we will call **“The Mighty Mustard Seed”**

**~~~Prayer~~~**

**I. HOW THE KINGDOM “BEGINS” – v. 31**

***“It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown***

***in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth:”***

In comparing the Kingdom of God to a tiny mustard seed, Jesus was using a powerful illustration

While the mustard seed is not the smallest seed known to man,

It would have been the smallest seed planted in the gardens of Jesus' day

The mustard seed itself is very tiny

It takes about 750 of them to make up a single gram

There are 28 grams in an ounce

Thus, there some 21,000 mustard seeds in an ounce

It is a tiny seed, but it produces a very large plant

I will say more about that in a bit

First, let look at the …

**A. ‘Tiny Beginning’**

Truth is; most people believed that nothing would ever come of the Lord Jesus and His ministry

The people could see the tiny beginning, but they could not see the great big picture

Let's consider some of the facts

**1.** Jesus was born in the tiny town of Bethlehem in abject poverty

**2.** He was reared in Galilee, and no one believed that a man of God could come from there

**John 7:52 *– “They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet”***

**3.** He was raised in a Nazareth

The inhabitants of that city were considered to be wicked and worldly by other Jews

**4.** He had no political connections

He had no money

He had no support from the religious leaders

He wasn’t an insider / like Paul

**5.** Jesus was considered to be a nobody from nowhere Who would amount to nothing!

**6.** He had a questionable heritage

**John 8:41 *– “Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God”***

They were saying that He had no legitimacy

That He was born in sin

**7.** His followers were, for the most part, the dregs of society, fishermen, tax collectors, whores etc.

**8.** His own family didn’t believe Him

**9.** The Romans eventually nailed Him to a cross and He was buried in a borrowed tomb

**10.** His followers preached His resurrection, but most people ignored their message and considered them fools for following a dead man

**11.** Even the Lord's message was hard to swallow

For some it still is!

After all, Jesus said …

To get you have to give away what you have

He told people to love their enemies

He counseled men to turn the other cheek

He spoke of walking the second mile; succeeding through serving and denying self

All things that are contrary to our human nature

Just a Tiny Mustard Seed

There is no question that the Kingdom of God

was just like that tiny, insignificant mustard seed in the beginning

No one could see what the tiny seed Jesus was sowing would become!

**B. The Continued Contrast today**

**Matthew 7:13, 14 – *“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:”
“Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it”***

The majority still to this day mock Jesus and make fun of His claims to be God in the flesh and the only Saviour of men

There are many who believe that Jesus never rose again from the dead

There are many who deny that He ever existed

Here are the facts: God sent His Son into this world

He planted the Lord Jesus in the insignificant soil of a remote province of Rome called Israel

He grew up there; He lived there and He died there

He rose again in that obscure place

And, the kingdom He founded by His death and resurrection continues to exist today!

In fact, it appears to be thriving!

Although the numbers are small

So, that is **HOW THE KINGDOM “BEGAN”**

Next, let’s look at …

**II. HOW THE KINGDOM “BUILDS” – v. 32a**

***“But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches;”***

When the tiny mustard seed is planted in good soil,

It germinates and produces a very large shrub-like plant that eventually grows to resemble a tree

Some mustard plants have been known to grow as high as 15’ tall

Something so small, with such humble beginnings, can become something that is truly amazing to behold

**A. God’s Spirit as produced Phenomenal Growth**

Again, this is a picture of the amazing growth of the Kingdom of God

When the seed was planted in ancient Israel,

The prospects for success seemed far away

In the beginning there was just Jesus and a few followers

Even though He had 1000’s that followed Him

Most still did not believe in Him

This was true right up to the day of Pentecost

Where the Bible tells us that there were about 120 devoted followers gathered together

**Acts 1:15 –** ***“And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)”***

But on that day something amazing would take place!

**Acts 1:8 –** ***“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth”***

In **Acts 2:41** over 3,000 people came to faith in Christ,

***“Then they that gladly received his Word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls”***

Then in **Acts 4:4**, just a short time later, another 5,000 were saved at one time

***“Howbeit many of them which heard the Word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand”***

The church began to grow at an astounding rate

It wasn't many days until the church in Jerusalem is said to have numbered some 50,000

That was just the beginning!

As the message was carried around the world, vast multitudes began to come to Jesus

Cities and nations fell on their knees in the face of the message of the Gospel of grace

This growth has continued down to this day

Who but God knows the true count of the souls that have been saved from sin and damnation?

Everywhere the Gospel seed had been planted, souls have been saved and lives have been changed

The church has continued to grow and the Kingdom of God on earth has continued to expand

There will come a day when a vast multitude that cannot be numbered will stand before the Lord in Heaven and praise Him for saving them by His grace,

**Revelation 7:9 *– “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;”***

**B. God has a way of bringing great things out of humble beginnings**

**I Corinthians 1:26-29 …**

**1.** Look at David … He was a mustard seed

He was the youngest son in a family of eight boys

He was ignored and given the job no one else in the family wanted, taking care of the sheep

God took this mustard seed and made a giant-killing king out of his life

**2.** Consider Gideon! … He was a mustard seed too

He was from the smallest family in the smallest tribe in the nation of Israel

God took Gideon and used him as a great military leader

**3.** Now, how about us?

If we are a child of God today, we’ve all certainly had mustard seed beginnings!

According to the Bible, we were sinners

**Romans 3:10-23** certainly makes that clear

According to **Ephesians 2:1** we were **“*dead in trespasses and sins*”**

According to the Bible, we were all under a death sentence and were headed to Hell

**Ephesians 2:3 *– “Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others”***

**John 3:18, 36 *– “He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him”***

But God, in His grace, looked beyond what we were to see what we could become through His grace

He saved us, and planted us in Jesus and now our life is bearing fruit for the glory of God

**Zech. 4:10** says - **“*For who hath despised the day of small things?*”**

God can take someone who seems insignificant and make something great out of them!

He can take a backward, stuttering man and use him to bring the Law of God to humanity, He did that with Moses

He can take an awkward, shy shoe salesman and use him to shake the world for Jesus

He did that with D. L. Moody

What could He do with our life?

**HOW THE KINGDOM “BEGINS”**

**HOW THE KINGDOM “BUILDS”**

**III. HOW THE KINGDOM “BLESSES” – v. 32b**

***“so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it”***

This tiny seed grew into an immense plant

Its branches spread themselves out offering a place for the birds to rest

In the shadow of that plant the birds found shelter from the storms; rest from their weariness and shade from the heat of the sun

The humble mustard seed produced a plant that had many uses for man

People gathered its leaves and served them up as food

The seeds were crushed and used as a condiment;

The pungent flavor enhancing the bland diet of the people

Those seeds were also used as a medicine

They were crushed and mixed with other things to make antidotes for snake, scorpion and spider bites

Poultices were made and they were used to fight colds and other physical ailments

The Mustard Plant is a very attractive Plant to man

And just like the Mustard Plant draws man’s attention

So does the Kingdom of God

**A. The Attraction of the Kingdom of God**

Just as the plant in this parable brought the birds to flock to it for shelter,

The Kingdom of God has provided many benefits for Mankind / Saved and Unsaved alike

Everywhere the Gospel has germinated, compassion, decency and morality have sprung up

With that, Hospitals and schools have been founded

Truth and salvation have been proclaimed and lives have been changed

Everywhere the Gospel has gone; it has brought about the destruction of all the wicked and vile things men do

Demonism, cannibalism, polygamy, child sacrifice and ten thousand other evils

The spread of the Gospel has built orphanages for the fatherless and homes for the homeless

The Gospel has reached out to comfort the bereaved, care for the infirm, and cure the sick

The Gospel has changed individuals, communities and nations

Even this great nation owes its existence and blessings to the spread of the Gospel of grace

This nation was founded on the principles of the Gospel and the Christian faith,

And even those who reject the Gospel in America today still reap the benefits of a nation founded by God and for God

When the Kingdom of God moves in with divine power, the kingdom of Satan must move out

It may have had humble beginnings, but God has used it to accomplish great and wonderful things

The Kingdom of God is Attractive because of its many Benefits to mankind

**B. The Blessings of the Kingdom of God**

**1.** The Birds

We need to understand who the ***“Birds”*** are in this Parable

The ***“Birds”*** are tares among Wheat

They are the folks who have a profession but no possession

They are all the folks that are attracted to the …

goodness of the Gospel, but are never transformed by it

As the Gospel spreads and the church grows, it will become the dwelling place of many who have a false profession

The birds in this parable are believed to represent unsaved people

**Mark 4:4 – *“And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up”***

**Mark 4:15 – *“And these are they by the way side, where the Word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the Word that was sown in their hearts”***

People who never truly get saved

There are many spiritual meaning for use of Birds in the Bible

An in this case it is used in a negative sense

But at the same time there are …

**2.** The Blessings

-- A shelter from the storms of life

**Psalm 27:5 –** “For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me; He shall set me up upon a rock”

-- Rest from the weariness of sin and religious works

**Matthew 11:28 *– “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”***

-- Shade from the fierce wrath of Almighty God,

**Romans 8:1 *– “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit”***

-- Food for the hungry soul,

**Psalm 34:8 –** ***“O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him”***
**Psalm 107:9 *– “For He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness”***

-- A new, better life

He can take a bland life and move into and make that life abound with the blessings of the Lord,

**John 10:10 *– “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly”***

-- He is the antidote for the terrible poison of sin,

**I John 3:5 *– “And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin”***

-- He is the cure for the sting of death,

**John 5:24 *– “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life”***

**John 11:25, 26 *– “Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:” “And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?”***

-- He is the cure for the sin sick soul,

**Psalm 103:3 – *“Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;”*
Isaiah 53:4, 5 – *“Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted” “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed”***

Thank God for the Blessings we find in Jesus!

I bless the day that I came under the shelter of His branches!

I bless the day when the poultice of grace was applied to the deadly wound of my sin and I was healed

**CONCLUSION**

What is *The Message Of The Mighty Mustard Seed*?

The primary message is this: *The Kingdom of God may have had humble beginnings, but it will expand and grow until it has a universal impact*

The secondary message is this: *God can take something that seems so small and insignificant and He can transform it into something real big*!

He has done that with the Kingdom of God

He has done that in many of us

He can do that for all who will come to Him by faith

You should take a look at your own life today

If you are not a child of God, you should take your life and place it in the hands of God

You might think He won't have you and can't use you;

The fact is, He won't turn you away and He will do more in and through your life than you ever imagine

If you are a child of God, you should take your life and present it before the Lord today

He can take you and use you in ways you would never believe

Give Him your life and watch Him work!

Bring your mustard seed to Jesus today and watch Him take it and turn it into a massive plant for the glory of God

**HOW THE KINGDOM “BEGINS”**

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