

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #196

Jesus Addresses Crucial Issues in Discipleship

Jesus Describes the Kingdom Using Parables

Luke 13.18-21 (Repeated Text: MT 13.31-33)

18 Then Jesus asked: *"What is the kingdom of God like? What can I compare it to? 19 It is like a tiny mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds perched in its branches."*

20 Again he asked, *"What can I compare the kingdom of God to? 21 It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour, until it worked its way all through the dough."*

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	In a Synagogue, Somewhere in Judea
Timeline	October or November (Months 33, 34)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VI: Jesus' Later Judean Ministry
	D. Jesus Minister in Judea and Trains His Disciples
	3. Jesus Addresses Crucial Issues in Discipleship
Title	xi. Jesus Describes the Kingdom Using Parables

COMMENT:

After Jesus' healing of the crippled woman (DJN #195) in a Synagogue on the Sabbath, Luke's description of Jesus' ministry in Judea ended with two brief parables describing the nature of the Kingdom. They are exact restatements of the parables that Jesus spoke on his second tour of Galilee. (MT Chapter 13.31-33)

Though the spoken words were the same in both instances, we do not "blend" such texts in the DAILY JESUS NEWS because they were clearly spoken at different times in Jesus' ministry, to different people. Jesus repeated much of his core teaching material. Today's reading is a good example.

Both the parables of the mustard seed, and yeast made the same important point concerning the nature of the Kingdom of God. Both of these substances are tiny to start, but they end up having a massive impact. The mustard seed grows from the smallest seed in Palestine into the largest plant. Yeast is tiny, and light but ends up transforming flour that is tens of thousands its size and weight. The impact and growth of the mustard seed and yeast are totally out of proportion to their initial size.

You cannot measure something by what it is at the beginning of it's life to know its real significance--we must wait to see its full impact before we evaluate its real nature. The Kingdom of God is like that.

Just three days before his death, Jesus would speak of his own life as a "seed" that was about the fall into the ground in death, and then create much fruit (JN 12.24). Literally billions of believers have been created out of the risen life of Jesus already, and the increase of his kingdom and reign will have no end. Yet, Jesus' life and ministry

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did not appear to be anything significant at all during his 30 years of preparation. Jesus himself is the greatest example of the truth of these two parables.

In spite of the fact that 99.9% of the Jewish people rejected the "signs of the times" in the life and ministry of Jesus, a tiny portion of people did believe and follow him. After his resurrection and ascension this tiny band would spread throughout the earth to eventually encompass every tribe, language, nation, and cultural group of the entire world. The Kingdom of God was destined to grow with a powerful, unstoppable force.

Jesus had great faith in the future growth of his kingdom through his people. the Church. We should, too.

APPLICATION:

Even massive redwood trees that live for thousands of years begin as one seed. God has designed living things to grow through the multiplication of their cells. This is an unstoppable process in nature. So is the kingdom of God.

We should not despise small beginnings when they are the work of God. We need to patiently trust him to produce the fruit of his kingdom over time, tiny cell by cell. We are certain of the outcome.

What small steps do you need to take today in your spiritual life in order to grow more tomorrow?

In your physical life? Your ministry?

How does the nature of Kingdom growth encourage you in making small beginnings?