



A just weight
and balance

are the
LORD'S:

Thus saith the Lord...

- From the first two parables that Jesus taught and then explained,
- It is easy to surmise that the disciples may have been discouraged by what they heard...

- "The Parable Of The Sower",
- Only one soil of four would be truly receptive to the Word sown
 - "The Parable Of The Wheat And Tares",
 - They learned that Satan would be doing his best to undermine the efforts of the Sower

- The next two parables in Matthew 13:31-33
 - Were told by Jesus to encourage His disciples.
 - The 1st parable is that of "The Mustard Seed" (Mt 13:31-32)
 - The 2nd parable is that of "The Leaven" (Mt 13:33)

- The Old Testament prophets **foretold the humble beginning** of the Kingdom of God:
- Concerning the Messiah we read:
Isaiah 53:3 (AKJV)
- **He is despised and rejected of men;**
a man of sorrows,
and acquainted with grief:
- **and we hid as it were our faces from**
him; he was despised,
and we esteemed him not.

- **Daniel prophesied concerning the kingdom of God:**
 - **Daniel 2:35 (AKJV)**
- **Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them:**
- **and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.**

- **Consider this humble description of the beginning...**
 - "The Son of Man grew up **in a despised province;**
- He did not appear in public until **his thirtieth year;**
- Then **taught for two or three years** in neighboring villages, and occasionally at Jerusalem;
 - **Made a few converts,** chiefly among the poor and unlearned;
- And then falling into the hands of his enemies, **died the shameful death of the cross.**
 - It appeared **doomed** from the beginning.

- The growth of the church in the first century A.D. certainly confirmed the truth of Jesus' parable
 - The 120 disciples grew to over 3000 just in one day
(Acts 2:41-42)
 - It was soon about 5000 - Acts 4:4
- The number of the disciples continued to "multiply"
- Acts 6:7
- Throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria - Acts 9:31
- Years later, there were "thousands" of believers just in Jerusalem alone - Acts 21:20
- Even today, we see the growth and influence of the kingdom of heaven in lives of believers around the world!

- Matthew 13:31-32,
Jesus said that the
mustard seed was
“smaller than all other seeds,”
- but that when it was full
grown, it would be
large enough for birds
to nest in its branches.

- Today, we know that there are seeds even smaller than the mustard seed.
 - For instance, the orchid seed is so small and fine that it's almost dust-like.
 - There are those who would also question whether a mustard seed could ever grow into a tree that is large enough to hold a bird nest.

- Now, if Jesus
(who claimed to be God)

was wrong about the mustard seed,

- Why should we trust anything
else that He said?

- And on what basis can the
Bible be considered reliable

on any scientific
or historical matter?

- Please note that Jesus was not comparing the mustard seed to all other seeds in the world,
 - but to seeds that a local, Palestinian farmer might have “sowed in his field,”
(a key qualifying phrase in verse 31.)

- And it's absolutely true that the black mustard seed was the smallest seed ever sown by a first-century farmer in that part of the world.

- It's also true, as many modern-day encyclopedias will tell you, that the black mustard seed in Israel will typically grow to heights of **about 12 feet**
- Plenty large enough **to hold a bird nest.**

- It's important to remember that the Bible often uses everyday terminology in order to communicate simple truth.
- Even today, we might refer to a "sunset" when, technically, scientifically, we know that the sun never actually "sets," i.e., it's the Earth that revolves.

- The context of **Matthew 13** makes it quite clear that Jesus was **addressing a local audience,** not an international conference of botanists.
- **It seems that no reasonable person** would therefore insist for very long that this text provides a viable basis for questioning either Jesus or the Bible, when it comes to getting the facts straight—scientifically, historically, or technically.

- **The mustard plant
of Palestine**

was very different from the mustard plant which we know in this country.

- **To be strictly accurate**
the mustard seed is not the smallest of seeds.

- There are 300,000 species of seed-bearing plants in the world that we know of.
- Among these, the smallest seed belongs to an orchid known as *Aerides odorata* .
- The seed of the *Aerides odorata* is only 0.2 millimeters in length.
 - It takes over three million *Aerides odorata* seeds to make up one gram
 - That is 3,300,000, to be exact!
 - 3,300,000 X 28 = ONE OUNCE.

- But in the east it was proverbial for smallness.
- For example, the Jews talked of a drop of blood as small as a mustard seed;
 - Or, a tiny breach of the ceremonial law, they would speak of a defilement as small as a mustard seed.

- And Jesus himself used the phrase in this way when he spoke of faith as a grain of mustard seed

- Matthew 17:20 (MLV)

And Jesus said to them,

“ If you have faith like a grain of mustard seed,
you will say to this mountain, Depart from here to over there, and it will depart, and nothing will be impossible for you.

- It is the fact of history that the greatest things must always begin with the smallest beginnings.
- Amazon, one of the world's top retailers, began on July 5, 1994 in the garage of Jeff Bezos. Bellevue, Washington.
- Today Amazon employs over 500,000.
- And its annual sales income is over \$300 billion.
 - Zechariah 4:10
**For who hath despised
the day of small things?**

- Let us note the growth process of the kingdom:
 - Mark 4:26-29 (MLV)
 - **26** And he said, “So is the kingdom of God, as if a man cast seed upon the earth;
 - **27** and should sleep and rise night and day and the seed should sprout and grow, he does not know how.
 - **28** For the earth is bearing-fruit by herself; first the blade, then the head, then the full grain in the head.
 - **29** But when the fruit is ripe, immediately he sends forth the sickle, because the harvest has come.

- **Parable of the Sower**

Jesus has discussed

the growth of the word of God

in the heart of man

(**Matthew 13:18-23**)

- **Parable of the Tares**

he discussed its growth

in the world as they are surrounded

by the sons of the wicked one,

“**tares**”.

(**Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43**).

- **Matthew 13:31-33:**
Jesus pictures the **growth of the kingdom** and its permeating influence.
- **Remember that parables are pictures** from everyday life that show what the kingdom is like,
 - **Mark 4:30** (MLV)
 - **And he said, “To what shall be similar to the kingdom of God? Or in what parable shall we compare it?”**

- Why mustard seed?
 - Our Lord employed here a symbol which he expected these people to understand.
 - And if we can put ourselves back in their place, we will not have any trouble either.
- Mustard is a peculiar kind of seed.
- It has an unusual quality and this is what our Lord wanted them to catch.

- What do you think was the first thing these disciples thought of when they heard this symbol employed?
- I think it was very much like what we would think.
 - Mustard seed is biting, irritating, disturbing, and this is what our Lord means.

- **That is the character of mustard**
and these people knew that.
 - So our Lord is using a very apt symbol by which he indicates that the message of the kingdom of God **is intended to be arousing, irritating, disturbing, among men.**
- Turn it loose, and it will get a whole community excited, stirred up, either **negatively** or **positively**.

- Here he is evidently stressing the apparent insignificance of the gospel.
 - It does not look like much.
 - It does not sound like much.
 - You proclaim,
Acts 22:16
be baptized, and wash away your sins,"
 - That does not impress many people.

- So the world is **not very excited about it,**
- Not very much **impressed with it.**
- The world does not regard it as a tremendous, **earth-shaking philosophy.**
- So in its smallness it is insignificant, **it is despised.**

- But let someone actually believe it, **and see what happens.**
- It is the most **transforming,**
- The most **revolutionary** thing that can occur to them.
 - It is the beginning of **a radical change** **in all their life.**

- When the gospel comes into a human heart what kind of character does it produce?
 - Lowliness of heart.
(**Philippians 2:3**)
 - It takes away pride,
 - And self-centeredness and
 - Renders a person mEEK and gentle toward others.
 - 2Corinthians 5:17
**If any man *be* in Christ,
he is a new creature:
**old things are passed away; behold,
all things are become new.****

- Jesus said,
"He that is greatest in the kingdom of heaven must become the least of all. If any would become great among you, let him become the servant of all,"
(Mark 9:35).

- That is the normal, natural, usual result of the mustard seed's growth.

- These life changing qualities begin by the Sowing the Seed.

- Luke 8:11 (MLV)

- The seed is the word of God.

- Kingdom does not grow by military power .

- But by the word of the kingdom planted in good and honest hearts,

- Mark 4:20 (MLV)

- “And these are those who were sown upon the good ground; such as hear the word and accept it and bear-fruit, one thirty times and one sixty times and one a hundred times.”

- The Kingdom does not grow by gimmicks.
 - It grows by the word of God
 - One soul at a time,
 - 1 Peter 1:23 (MLV)
 - **Having been born again, not out of corruptible seed, but from incorruptible, through the word of God, which lives and abides forever.**

- We know **growth** comes from the power of the word of God:
 - **Romans 10:17** (MLV)
So belief comes from hearing and hearing by the word of God.
 - **2 Peter 3:17-18** (MLV)
- **17** Therefore beloved, knowing these things beforehand, you guard yourselves lest, being carried away with the error of the lawless, **you fall from your own steadfastness.**
- **18** But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

- **We do not see how**
God Causes the Kingdom
to Grow in a Person's Life,

- But the Effects of that Growth
are Visible:

- **Mark 4:27-28** (MLV)

- **27** and should sleep and rise night and day and
the seed should sprout and grow,
he does not know how.

- **28** For the earth is bearing-fruit by herself;
first the **blade**, then the **head**,
then the **full grain** in the head.

- We can't see the word working in the heart,
but we know it is
by seeing its results:
 - Attitudes change,
faith develops,
 - Obedience
transforms
conduct as character
becomes godly.

- **Isaiah 55:11**

**my word ...will not
return to me void,
but it will accomplish
what I please.**

**And it will prosper in the thing
to which I sent it.**

- **Jeremiah 23:29**

**Is not my word like fire?
says Jehovah and
like a hammer that
breaks the rock in pieces?**

- I recently read the amazing biography of Charles Thompson, a slave.
- Mr. Thompson tells of his treatment by his masters.
 - Some good but mostly bad.
 - Mr. Thompson never lost his faith despite all ill treatment.
- He learned to read and write knowing that:
"if any negro shall be found writing, his forefinger shall be cut off at the first joint."

- **BIOGRAPHY OF A SLAVE**
- Being The Experiences Of **Rev. Charles Thompson,**
 - A Preacher Of The United Brethren Church,
- **WHILE A SLAVE IN THE SOUTH.**
- **Together With Startling Occurrences Incidental To Slave Life.**
 - **1875**
- <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/9941/9941-h/9941-h.htm>

- God brings the seed to full growth:
- 1 Corinthians 3:6 (MLV)
 - I planted, Apollos watered; but God was causing the growth.

- **Personal Growth in the Kingdom is similar to the mustard seed:**
 - **Luke 17:21** (MLV)
- **For behold, the kingdom of God is inside you*.**
- **Faith grows, love abounds, patient endurance:**
 - **2 Thessalonians 1:3** (MLV)
- **We are obligated to give thanks to God always concerning you brethren,...**
- **because your faith is growing exceedingly**
 - **and the love of each one of you all toward one another is increasing;**

- One last comment relates to
 “The birds”
 - **Matthew 13:32**
 when it is grown,
 - **it is the greatest among herbs,**
 and becometh a tree,
 - **so that the birds of the air come**
 and lodge in the branches
 thereof.

- In the parable of the sower,
Christ used the birds
to represent the devil,
(**Matthew 13:4,19**)
- Coupled with John's prophecy of the apostate church, that it should become "a hold of every unclean and hateful bird"
(**Revelation 18:2**),
- This parable makes it very likely that the ultimate corruption of the kingdom of heaven is intended.

- **Jeremiah 29:8**

For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream,

- **29:9** **for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, declares the LORD.**

- **2 John 1:7**

**For many deceivers
are entered into the world,**

- **Ephesians 5:6**

**Let no man deceive you
with vain words:**

- **Matthew 13:3**

**And he spake many things unto them in parables,
saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow;**

- **13:4 And when he sowed,
some seeds fell by the way side,
and the fowls came and devoured them up:**

- May this parable **be both:**
 - **A blessing**
 - and
 - **A warning.**

**The doors of the church
are open.**

**The Spirit and the Bride
Say
“Come”.**

Revelation 22:17

