

CALL TO WORSHIP (Bill Kolb)

LEADER: We are looking forward to the coming of the kingdom of God.

PEOPLE: It is a kingdom that will have no end.

LEADER: It is a kingdom in which God's purposes will be fully realized.

PEOPLE: It is a kingdom that has already begun.

LEADER: It is marked by small acts of kindness, love and generosity.

PEOPLE: It is hidden, quiet and works in ways we often do not recognize.

LEADER: This kingdom will reunite what has been separated and restore what has been broken.

PEOPLE: We pray for this kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven.

ALL: Hallelujah! Amen

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (Unknown yet)

I believe in truth as a living Reality,
not captured in theory or a creed,
but revealed to those who love;
the truth of Jesus,
the Spirit of truth,
the truth of God.

Because I believe I trust,

not blindly but open eyed and bold
as a child climbing into a mother's lap;
the truth of Jesus,
the Spirit of truth,
the truth of God.

Because I believe I serve,
not as a slave that serves a tyrant
but like [farmers](#) reaping a harvest;
the truth of Jesus,
the Spirit of truth,
the truth of God.

PRAYER (Rhonda)

Gracious God, I invite you into this place of worship, and ask that the words of my mouth be your words, and that this message bring your words to the hearts and minds of the listeners. May this service bring honor to you, O Lord. Amen.

Father's Day Clip

This is Father's Day. This morning we honor all father's, grandfather's and all those who have held the honored place of father whether they be uncles, friends, or teachers. In Exodus 20:12 we are commanded to "Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the Lord your God will give you." We recognize now that you have been among the "planter's of the seed."

I would like to begin by asking you, “What is stronger than God, more evil than the devil, poor people have it, the rich don’t need it, and if you eat it you will die:”
The answer: Nothing!

Only 17% of Stanford University students, and 80% of kindergarten students got the correct answer. The parables of Jesus are much like riddles. Literally, the world parable means “a riddle.”

A parable gives the reader or listener the responsibility for figuring out what it means. Jesus told more than 40 parables during his ministry, and even 2,000 years later we are trying to figure out what they meant.

Our Scripture this morning comes from Mark 4:26-34. The Gospel of Mark was not written by one of the disciples, but by John Mark, who traveled with Paul on his first missionary journey into Pamphylia, or what we now know as Turkey. He was also an associate of Peter in his ministry, and heard and recorded first hand eyewitness accounts of Jesus’ life.

The Gospel of Mark is the shortest gospel, but it moves quickly through episodes of Jesus’ life from Christ’s baptism by John to the resurrection in Jerusalem. For John Mark, it is the foundation of the Good News. Or, like our parable today, it is “the mustard seed” of the Kingdom of God; once planted it will grow and grow.

CLIP OF SEED PACKAGES

Some years ago, a company mailed out some special advertising business post cards with a mustard seed glued to it with a caption that went something like this: “If you have faith as small as this mustard seed in our (product), you are guaranteed to get excellent results and be totally satisfied,” – Signed, the Management

A few months later, one recipient of this promotional piece wrote back to the company and said, “You will be interested to know that I planted the mustard seed you sent on your advertising card and it has grown into a very healthy bush producing wonderful tomatoes!”

Jesus wasn’t trying to fool anyone as this merchant had. In using a parable, he was giving us a frame of reference that we could relate to and understand. We can visualize an enormous bush growing from just one tiny seed. The people Christ was speaking to easily related to this parable. Planting a seed, watering it, and watching grow were integral to their lives. It was necessary in order to feed their families – they depended on it.

Jesus uses the idea of a mustard seed and growth to teach us about Christian faith. When Jesus told this parable, he compared it to loving God. When people begin to love Jesus, their love is like a tiny mustard seed before it is planted. It starts out very small at first and as you listen and learn about him, the love grows bigger and bigger.

Jesus started his kingdom with a handful of disciples. Every follower of Jesus is part of the kingdom. Each time we tell someone about Jesus, we are helping to grow the kingdom.

In the beginning there were only a few believers – but the number grew and grew until nearly 1/3 of the people worldwide, or nearly 2.3 billion people are believers. (Wikipedia)

CLIP OF WHEAT FARMERS

Some of you are farmers or your family were farmers, and some still think that their meat, eggs and milk come straight from Fry's. Today I want you to understand this parable and how it relates to your belief and your faith, and the faith of others; so here we go.

If you are a wheat farmer from Kansas or North Dakota, you know that the sun comes out every day, and then the rain comes, and the seed you planted grows and sprouts. You watch it anxiously as the first stalk appears, then the head grows into a full head of grain, and you are ready to harvest.

This is exactly what happens when the seed of God is planted in us or in others. It begins to form, and as we feed and nourish it, it grows; from the tiniest mustard seed into a full-grown tree. If we don't nourish and water the planted seed, it will wither and die. The same is true for our faith! If we are living in God, not only will we grow, we also can make a difference in the lives of those around us.

But what happens if we have bad things happen to us and we get turned off or discouraged? I recently taught a Bible Study where we drew a timeline of our lives and the bad things that happened to us: the loss of a loved one, divorce, illness, etc. Our faith could have withered with all the hard times. It was like drought, blizzard, or extreme heat and wind on a living plant.

However, when we went back to look at all the good gifts we have been given by God, we became nourished and started to grow in our faith. Not only our faith, but also our joy! We became like blooming flowers!

Despite all the hard times we had been through, the weaknesses, the failures, we had thrived! When we are living in God's kingdom and looking for the good, and loving those around us, like a healthy mustard bush, we flourish!

We all are "planters of the seed." The message for today is that even the smallest seed can plant a strong faith. It is up to us to feed and nourish it.

CLIP OF JESUS WITH CHILDREN

God commanded that the stories of his mighty acts in Israel's history and his laws be passed on from parents to children. This shows us the purpose and importance of religious education: To help each generation obey God and set its hope on him. It is important to keep children from repeating the same mistakes as their ancestors. Let's look at Psalm 78:1-7.

Psalm 78:1-7 New Living Translation (NLT)

¹ *O my people, listen to my instructions.
Open your ears to what I am saying,*
² *for I will speak to you in a parable.
I will teach you hidden lessons from our past—*
³ *stories we have heard and known,
stories our ancestors handed down to us.*
⁴ *We will not hide these truths from our children;
we will tell the next generation
about the glorious deeds of the LORD,
about his power and his mighty wonders.*
⁵ *For he issued his laws to Jacob;
he gave his instructions to Israel.
He commanded our ancestors
to teach them to their children,*
⁶ *so the next generation might know them—
even the children not yet born—
and they in turn will teach their own children.*
⁷ *So each generation should set its hope anew on God,
not forgetting his glorious miracles
and obeying his commands.*

Because this is Father's Day, maybe we should look at another view of what this parable might mean.

Deuteronomy 6:5-7 New International Version (NIV)

⁵ *Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.* ⁶ *These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts.* ⁷ *Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.*

Deuteronomy 31:12-13 New International Version (NIV)

¹² *Assemble the people—men, women and children, and the foreigners residing in your towns—so they can listen and learn to fear the LORD your God and follow carefully all the words of this law.* ¹³ *Their children, who do not know this law, must hear it and learn to fear the LORD your God as long as you live in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess.”*

Jesus loved children, even when his disciples tried to turn them away, he called them back to him, and took them to his knee and blessed them. Maybe today this parable is to remind fathers, grandfathers, and others that children are most important resource and our greatest responsibility.

Proverbs 22:6 (NIV)

“Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it.”

Fathers, (and mothers), what are you doing to pass on the history of God’s work to the next generation? Children are like mustard seeds: they need to be nourished to grow, and to flourish. On this Father’s Day, I encourage you to be the “planter of seeds” in your children, your grandchildren, and all others that you may encounter. Be a “planter of seeds” and look forward to your harvest.

As a Father’s Day gift, I would like to share this video of 5-year-old Claire Ryann Crosby and her father with *Peace in Christ*.

VIDEO

<https://davecrosby.bandcamp.com/track>

**Peace in Christ – 5-year-old Claire Ryann Crosby
and Dad**

When we plant the seed, we may not see the results that Claire’s father has, it may lay dormant for a time. But when the soil is just right, and has been nourished enough, faith will grown. Go ahead, be a planter of the seeds on this Father’s Day. Amen.