**The Kingdom of Heaven is like…**

**Today: *The Mustard Seed & The Leaven***

**Matthew 13:31-33**

**1. The Parable of The Mustard Seed- Matthew 13:31-32**

*“The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; and this is smaller than all the other seeds; but when it is full grown it is larger than the garden plants, and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.”*

We are enamored with grand things. They are impressive in their scale. They must be worthy of our respect because they are so large. But do you know that **everything** large starts out small. Our Nation, FedEx, etc. All great things start out with a small idea, an original concept born in someone’s mind. All music, all symphonies, concertos, hymns, and songs come basically from eight notes. The English language has just 26 letters. Small beginnings, great conclusions! This is what the Lord is teaching: The Kingdom will start out small but it will end up having a global influence. Christianity today has a global influence the disciples probably thought would never be possible. The integrity and credibility of Jesus is at stake here. The mustard seed, the kingdom, either grows or Jesus doesn’t know what He’s talking about. The leaven, the kingdom, will have great influence upon all of mankind or Jesus is speaking fantasy and fairytale here.

**BIG IDEA: SMALL THINGS CAN HAVE PROFOUND RESULTS.**

**BACKGROUND ABOUT THE KINGDOM:** God is in the growth business. However, God’s growth plan is often times slower than we have patience for. He’s going to build the house with a firm foundation whereas we may slap it together for a quicker move in date. If God were in charge of our retirement account, I think it’s a safe bet to say, He would advise us to make investments for long term gain whereas we are tempted to want to make the quick buck.

The disciples wanted the promised kingdom right then and there and why shouldn’t they have. It was promised to them in the OT. **(Read Micah 4:1-3)** They believed Jesus was the promised Messiah, which means He was the promised King who would set up the kingdom. The kingdom had very clear definitions. It would come in glory. It would come in power. There would be pomp and circumstance. There would be great cataclysmic events. There would be punishment of evildoers. There would be freedom for oppression. The King would rule and His subjects would be glad in it. There would be peace and prosperity. No war, no crime, no poverty, no suffering, no death. Come Lord Jesus come!

When it didn’t happen as they expected, Jesus teaches they why in Matthew 13. He calls it in the mystery form in v. 11. That means it’s something that isn’t clear in the OT. This is a form of the kingdom you never really understood.

The first parable He gives them is about 4 kinds of soil. 3 out of the 4 reject the soil. More rejection than acceptance! But in this form of the Kingdom, I’m still ruling, but I’m still allowing for rejection. The disciples were probably thinking, “Well, how should we handle these rejecters?”

So, He tells them another parable, the wheat and the tares. The citizens of the kingdom and the rejecters are going to exist together until when? The judgment. The rejecters are everywhere. We feel outnumbered. He’s saying it’s not your job to be the executioners. Your job is to be wheat in the midst of the world. Your job is to be an influence for the King. Your job is to be salt and light. Your job is evangelism. Your job is to love, to serve, to pray and to finish.

So you’re telling me there is going to be evil and rejection that I’m going to have to deal with in this kingdom? That’s not what I was hoping for!

The first two parables speak of conflict. They talk about the right and wrong fighting with one another. But the next two talk about the victory of the right. In the end, the tiny little mustard seed will fill the earth, the little piece of leaven, leaven the whole loaf of bread.

* The disciples struggled with understanding the kingdom.

**Acts 1:6**

*“And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?”* THIS IS AFTER THE RESURRECTION!

* The Pharisees, too, struggled with understanding the kingdom.

**Luke 17:20-21** WHERE IS YOUR KINGDOM, KING?

*“Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, “The kingdom of heaven is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, ‘Look here it is!’ or, ‘There it is!’ For behold the kingdom of God is in your midst.”* YOU CAN’T SEE IT. IT STARTS SO SMALL.

**John 18:36 “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting, that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.”**

It starts with the disciples. Think about them for a while. They had to have felt wholly inadequate, wholly unqualified, completely fearful and very small. We he died on the cross, they undoubtedly thought, “Well, that’s it with Him. It’s over. We believed in a lie.”

**TAKEAWAY: IT’S A GROWING KINGDOM THAT BEGINS WITH MY HEART.**

**2. The Parable of The Leaven- Matthew 13:33**

*He spoke another parable to them, “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three pecks of meal, until it was all leavened.”*

**BIG IDEA: GOD USES US TO INFLUENCE OTHERS.**

The leaven influences a large amount of dough. And does so in a positive way (salt & light) It makes it better and more tasty. Makes the bread better.

* We can have a **positive** impact for the kingdom of heaven.

**Acts 17:6**

*“These men who have upset the world have come here also.”*

* It starts with **one person** at a time.

**READ Acts 16:20-34- (God’s purpose was the salvation of the jailer.)**

**Isaiah 9:8**

*“Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?’ Then I said, “Here am I. Send me!”*

**TAKEAWAY: WE MUST INJECT OURSELVES IN THE WORLD.**

It can’t sit on the shelf and yell at the bread; it must be inserted into the dough to have an influence.

The fact that the kingdom starts small isn’t difficult to overcome because it has the power to influence everything.