

WHAT IS THE KINGDOM LIKE?

Introduction: Read Luke 13:18-21. In our text Jesus compares his kingdom to two everyday occurrences in order to illustrate different characteristics of that kingdom.

A. THE TWO PARABLES COMPARED.

In the first illustration the kingdom is likened unto a mustard seed.

This small seed, about the size of a pin head, grows into a plant large enough for birds to nest in. "From small acorns mighty oaks grow."

The lesson is clear: from modest and humble beginnings, the gospel of the kingdom can grow to have a tremendous effect: Changes are dynamic.

Despite Satan's discouragements ("nobody's interested," "They're going to do it anyway, why fight it?") we need to keep planting kingdom seeds.

In the second illustration the kingdom is likened unto leaven or yeast.

1. Jesus emphasized the spreading power of the yeast throughout the meal.

2. Even though the work is unseen, the yeast's influence is very effective.

Note contrast between the two parables: (1) In the first (mustard seed) growth is observable--here it is unseen; (2) In the first birds came to nest in its branches, while here no more meal is added to the amount; yet (3) both stress different aspects of the same kingdom: some growth is natural & visible; some growth is slow through unseen influences such as example, love, conscience or friendship.

B. THE ELEMENT OF GROWTH.

1. Growth means change, which is uncomfortable for many people. We like our ruts and traditions. Maturity, strength and wisdom come through growth.
2. The gospel never changes but evangelistic methods and class curriculums do.
3. Growth is painful as we move into less familiar territory. But grow we must!

C. THE ELEMENT OF AGENTS.

4. Human participation is necessary for the growing process of the kingdom.
5. In the mustard seed parable "*a man took seed and put in his garden*"; the second parable "*a woman took [leaven] and hid in three measures of meal.*"
6. In both instances the seed and leaven would have been useless if they were left alone to grow by themselves. Somebody had to get involved.
7. It is the whole picture that represents the kingdom. Seed & leaven (*gospel?*), the man and woman (*Christians?*) and growth are all part of that picture.

Conclusion: Are you part of this picture of Christ's kingdom? God has done his part in giving us a Savior. Mercy and peace need now to be taught in his name.

8. Are you faithful in attendance to every service? Are you using your talents?
9. Are you willing to prepare yourself for service and follow through in labor.