

Just a little can do a lot.

“The Parable of the Mustard Seed and The Parable of the Leaven”



“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.”

Habakkuk 2:14

Have you ever thought that you needed to do something but then thought it wouldn't make any difference because you just couldn't make a real contribution or a real difference in someone's life? So you did nothing and rationalized that you wouldn't have made a difference anyway. The two very short parables in Luke 13:18-21 address this problem.

Christ had been talking with His disciples for quite a while and was trying to make them realize that He was only going to be on earth for a short time and it was up to them to make sure that the message of God's love and salvation get to all parts of the world. A parable is defined as a comparison of two things. It is frequently told in story form and generally has two meanings. Jesus was doing wonderful things. He had just healed a woman after eighteen years of illness. He was being criticized by the synagogue leaders. He knew that the time He had left on earth was short. The first one is about a small mustard seed, but planted in the ground and fertilized it grows into a large tree where birds can nest in its branches. The second is about a woman who took a small amount of yeast and put it into flour. The yeast made the flour multiple and rise so the woman could make bread.

Both of these things are very small, almost unnoticeable. Yet when used, they have wonderful results. Christ needed the disciples to realize that they were small in number, but they would be the ones that would take the message of love to everyone in the world. But they couldn't do it alone. They needed help. They could be the mustard seed or the yeast, but they needed help from others also. Christ had to make sure they did not get discouraged. He would always be with them as He is with us today. Sometimes we can't see any progress with what we are attempting to do, but if we have the faith of the mustard seed or the yeast we have the promise that we will see results.

There are many ways of looking at these very short verses. We can say that the yeast represents the Kingdom of Heaven and the dough is the world. Part of our job is to make sure that the whole world knows about Christ and His love. At the time Christ was telling this parable, He was among the people. But, he knew that He would be leaving this earth. He was going to leave them with the Holy Spirit which could also represent the yeast or leaven. Christ started the ministry with twelve men in a small spot in Galilee. He didn't go to one of the big cities. But the love of God is still growing today.

When the bread is baked, or the tree grows from the mustard seed, everyone can see the results. The tree doesn't grow overnight. The same is true of the work of love in our hearts. That love grows in our hearts and changes us from the inside so that we can show that love to others.

If we read again the verse from the Old Testament found at the beginning of this devotional, we can see that even then it was predicted that the yeast will work until it is fully leavened and the kingdom of God will be world-wide.

Sometimes we are the yeast that permeates the love of God to others. Sometimes we can also be the dough that is fed and allows us to grow in our faith.

I am reminded of a song we used to sing at camp called "Pass It On" by Kurt Kaiser. We can be the spark to help someone come to know Christ as their personal Saviour. We can pass on the love to others that He has given us

"It only takes a spark, to get a fire going.
And soon all those around, can warm up it it's glowing.

Chorus:

That's how it is with God's love,
once you've experienced it, it's fresh like spring,
you want to sing, you want to pass it on.

Verse 2

What a wondrous time is Spring
When all the trees are budding.
The birds begin to sing,
the flowers start their blooming.

Verse 3

I wish for you my friend
this happiness that I've found
You can depend on him
It matters not where you're bound.

Last chorus:

I'll shout it from the mountain tops
I want the world to know
The Lord of Life has come to me
I want to pass it on."

Prayer: Beautiful Saviour, You spoke to the disciples through stories, and they had a hard time understanding the scope of Your love. We have the same problem today. Often we have little faith, but we know that with Your love, we can move mountains. Help us to allow that faith to grow that we can help spread Your love to everyone around us by the way we live, and by what we say. Amen.

1. What is the significance of the leaven?
2. Which are we, the yeast or the dough?
3. Where can we start to be an influence as small and mighty as the mustard seed?
4. Why did Christ tell us that we needed to become as children in order to understand His love?

The Parable of the Mustard Seed and The Parable of the Leaven.

“Then said he, ‘Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.’ And again he said, ‘Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.’” Luke 13:18-21