

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

RLJ-1933

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PART 35: MUSTARD SEED AND LEAVEN

THE MUSTARD SEED

Jesus was a master storyteller utilizing everyday events or items to convey messages about the Kingdom of God. Jesus likened the kingdom of heaven to a mustard seed, which he said was the smallest of all seeds.

A mustard seed is 1 to 2 millimeters in diameter, or 0.039 to 0.079 inches. While it is an herb, it is also a tree that can range 6 to 30 feet in height; the crown is usually equal to its height. A mustard tree is the largest of the herbs Jesus created.¹

The Kingdom of God started with one person – Jesus – who was God and man at the same time. The new covenant came into power with the resurrection and today there are Christians in every nation. **Matthew 13:31-32**

Jesus used the mustard seed to teach about faith. The apostles were first on the scene and unsuccessfully tried to cast out demons from a boy. When Jesus arrived, He cast out the demons without hesitation and the boy was cured.

When the disciples asked why they failed, the God-man replied their faith wasn't where it needed to be. That's when Jesus told them they needed faith like the size of a mustard seed. That tiny amount of faith would allow them to do all kinds of miraculous things. **Matthew 17:15-20**

This particular demon in the boy also needed fasting and prayer to be removed. **verse 21**

THE LEAVEN

Yeast as we have today for baking was unknown at the time of Jesus. There were no stores selling yeast; instead, women took a small portion of dough and set it aside to ferment for the next batch of bread.

Back then, if you didn't want flat bread, a portion of the small fermented dough was mixed with the freshly made dough. This would cause the whole portion to rise as the bacteria from the leavened dough permeated the fresh dough. We now know the bacteria feeds on the sugar in the dough and this creates carbon dioxide, which makes the dough to swell. Once the dough has risen sufficiently, it is baked and the heat of the oven neutralizes the bacteria so it is safe to eat.²

During the Passover that was instituted in Egypt prior to the Israelites departure, they were told to eat unleavened bread. Leaven is equated with sin and God wanted them to eat bread that had not been contaminated. The Passover was a redemptive act of God

¹ <https://tinyurl.com/3pe6d3dw>

² <https://tinyurl.com/52mmrkp4>



in removing the Hebrews from slavery and setting them free. This was the only time they were instructed to eat unleavened bread. **Exodus 12:8; 1 Corinthians 5:6-8**

Jesus wanted to make a point that in time the Kingdom of Heaven would spread out to the whole world and He used the illustration of leaven to reinforce the point that it would eventually permeate the batch of dough. **Matthew 13:33**

SPEAKING IN PARABLES

In the beginning of His ministry in Galilee, Jesus taught spiritual truths as found in the Sermon on the Mount, but since the majority of the people did not respond to the message and rejected Jesus as the Messiah, from that point He only spoke to the masses through parables. **verses 34-35**

EXPLANATION

Matthew does not record how long Jesus taught the people on the beach of Lake Galilee, but when He was done, He instructed the people to return home, then He and the disciples went to a house. Once there, the disciples wanted to know the meaning of the tares parable. **verse 36**

Jesus explained that He was the one sowing the seed. The field is the world and the good seed that springs up are the children of the Kingdom of God. The tares are the unsaved people and Satan is the enemy that brought the bad seed. The harvest will take place at the end of the world and the reapers are the holy angels.

The tares will be gathered together and burned. Jesus will send out holy angels and they will remove from His kingdom all things that offend and those practicing iniquity. They will be cast into a furnace and there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

The righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their heavenly Father. **verses 37-43**

FURTHER CLARIFICATION BY JESUS

Some 90 years later, the last original apostle John was taken to heaven and commissioned to record what he saw and learned in heaven. **Revelation 1:9-20**

It is important to understand that when John wrote his Gospel, he did not know that he would write another book dictated by Jesus. The other apostles were dead and he was in his 90s when the final details were revealed concerning the parable of the tares.

Revelation 20:1-15

Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!

Do you have an ear to hear with?