

**ST PAUL'S CHURCH (RONDEBOSCH)  
THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST  
SERMON (YEAR B)**

**13 JUNE 2021**

**READINGS: 1 SAMUEL 15:34-16:13// PSALM 20/  
2 CORINTHIANS 5:6-10,14-17// MARK 3:20-35**

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*Lord Jesus you spoke to people in parables and so many looked but did not see, listened but did not hear Open our eyes that we may see, open our ears that we may hear and open our hearts that we may respond to your Word in Jesus name AMEN*

Today's Gospel reading (Mark 4:26--34) gives us two parables dealing with the kingdom of God. The two have a common theme - i.e., growth of the kingdom of God - but in the first (vv. 26--29) the growth is gradual, and in the second (vv. 30--32) growth is fantastic, growing from the smallest seed to a plant which is big enough to house the nests of birds.

I want to highlight 4 points that we learn from this parables about the Growth of the Kingdom of God

*1. We must plant the seed for the kingdom to grow*

The first thing we need to learn from this parable is that if we want to see God's kingdom grow, we must plant the seeds. This is the most basic step when it comes to gardening. If you leave out this step, no matter what else you do, you will never harvest a crop. Can you imagine a farmer preparing the ground and ploughing the land and getting everything ready for planting, and then never actually planting the seeds?

It begins with planting seeds. We have already seen from the parable of the sower that planting seeds means sharing God's word with other people. And so if we are to see God's kingdom grow, we must share God's word with others, especially the good news of Jesus Christ. If there is no seeds, there will be no plants, and no growth. It is that simple.

“Are we planting the seeds? Are we sharing God's word with other people?  
Are we sharing the gospel?”

But what if we have planted the seed but we see no growth taking place, we see no results and we feel desponded and discouraged

## ***2. We have to have faith and believe and trust in God that the kingdom will grow***

Many Christians get discouraged in witnessing and performing good deeds because they cannot see any immediate results of their work. And this was precisely the occasion for Jesus' giving the parable of the secret growing seed (4:26--29). For three years, Jesus and the Disciples preached, taught, and healed, but no progress could be seen - no change in society, no mass repentance, no mass revival. Even we as priest often feels discouraged when we sees no change in people's lives resulting from preaching the word and pastoral care and counselling or we see no change in church attendance and we have tried everything.

You know how discouraged I am some Sunday mornings when I report to you what has been stolen or vandalized at the Church and it seems everything we tried does not work

We often become discouraged because we see no results of our efforts. A bishop was the guest preacher in a certain church. At the time of the children's message, the children were allowed to ask the bishop about his work. One little girl asked, "What do you like to do best?" He answered, "I like best to mow our lawn because I can see that I have done something

Parents often feel the same way about the training of their children, they talk and pray for their children but they don't see any results. But they take comfort in the saying, "***Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.***"

My dear friends we need to understand that the seed of the Word will grow and eventually produce results. We need that hope and assurance.

## ***3. God will make his kingdom grow***

My dear friends the growth of the Kingdom does not depend on us. We are called to do our part-- to plant the seed . . . God is the one that makes it grow. Our work is to share the message of salvation. It is God's work to let that message take root and grow in a person's life. You and I should be working diligently to plant seed wherever we go. When there is an opening to share the good news of grace we should do so and then pray that God will let the seed to grow.

## True Spiritual Growth Comes from God and Not from Us

God's spirit begins to work in a person's heart and slowly draws the individual to Him. We see it in our own lives as well. As we expose ourselves to the truth we find ourselves being changed by it. Often we can't explain it. We don't cause growth . . . God does.

But we need to be patient. We live in a world where we want instant results – just pushing a button. The farmer plants the seed and then has to wait many months before the harvest. They must wait in the knowledge that you can't take a crop out until it is ready to be harvested.

Once again many parents know that when they are troubled about one of their children it is much better to pray for that child that God will make him grow up well than to rebuke him continually.

*William Carey was forty years in India before a single person became a Christian as a result of his work. During that time he did not despair. He knew that God would make the seed grow secretly.*

We must do our share of the work but the success is on God's hands.

### **4. God's kingdom starts small and it will grow large**

Jesus uses the parable of the mustard seed to illustrate another profound truth. Don't underestimate the power of a seed. Don't despise that which is small and seemingly insignificant. A mustard seed can grow into a bush and provide shade for birds. Just give it time.

According to C. J Ryle *"The beginnings of the Gospel started very small. It was like "a mustard seed cast into the garden." It was a religion which seemed at first so feeble, and helpless, and powerless, that it would not grow or last. Its first founder Jesus was, one who was poor in this world, and ended His life by dying the death of on the cross. Its first followers were a little company, whose number probably did not exceed a thousand when Jesus left the world. Its first preachers were a few fishermen and publicans, who were, most of them, unlearned and ignorant men. Its first starting point was a despised corner of the earth, called Judea, a small province of the Roman Empire but now 2000 years later the gospel is being preach all over the world and it has millions of followers*

In a society where bigness and fame and power are more important. We want bigger cars, bigger houses etc). However we need to appreciate the importance and the potential power of smallness. People need to know that a little faith can move giant mountains, that a little love can solve large problems, that a little word can give deep encouragement, that a little act can save the most desperately lost. God can make something special of a person of little or no apparent account,

My dear friends it is easy to think that the little seeds that you plant aren't going to do anything . . . but you are discounting God.

- you may think the small little ministry you are doing at the church isn't worth your time
- you may think that your R10/R50/R100 in the offering place can't do much
- you may believe that your visits to your sick friend isn't accomplishing anything
- you may think that your faltering speech wouldn't convince anyone of the truth of grace
- you may think that your limited knowledge of the things of God disqualifies you to share with others
- you may think that your faithful witness is falling on deaf ears

But you don't know what God can do through your faithfulness! You don't know how many people are going to be impacted simply because you were faithful in the little things of life. You don't know who is watching or listening. You don't know what God is doing through the seed you plant. We need to stop thinking of ourselves as "insignificant ". Think of all the times God used one unimportant person to change the world,

## **CONCLUSION**

Jesus wants us to look at the growth of the Kingdom of God differently. He wants us to stop worrying over how we can grow the kingdom, He wants us to stop putting our confidence in our strength and ability and begin trusting His ability. We need to stop trying to force things and let Him work in the quiet of a heart. We must stop saying that things are hopeless and instead trust the work of His Spirit. We must stop making excuses to take responsibility and ignoring

our opportunities because we are just a "little seed". Instead, He wants us to rest in His hand and realize that in His hand, even the smallest seed can bring growth.

Remember to the rest of the world we may be nobodies . . . but to God we are so valuable that He can use us.

A small farming village was threatened with drought because the rains had failed to arrive. On a hot and dry Sunday, the pastor told his congregation, "There isn't anything that will save us except to pray for rain. Go home, pray, believe, and come back next Sunday ready to thank God for sending rain." The people returned to church the following Sunday. As they sat down the Pastor gently rebuked them. "We can't worship today because you do not yet believe," he said. "But we prayed" they protested, "and we do believe." "Believe?" he responded. "Then where are your umbrellas?"

Faith is made visible by our actions. So let me ask you this morning "Where are our umbrellas?" Do we have umbrella faith?