

Expository Thoughts On Luke - Luke 13:18-21

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Transcript

PARABLES OF THE MUSTARD SEED, AND THE YEAST

There is a peculiar interest belonging to the two parables contained in these verses. We find them twice delivered by our Lord, and at two distinct periods in His ministry. This fact alone should make us give the more earnest heed to the lessons which the parables convey. They will be found rich both in prophetic and experimental truths.

The parable of the mustard seed is intended to show the progress of the Gospel in the WORLD.

The BEGINNINGS of the Gospel were exceedingly 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 could not live. Its first founder was One who was poor in this world, and ended His life by dying the death of a malefactor on the cross. Its first adherents were a little company, whose number probably did not exceed a thousand when the Lord 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 petty tributary province of the vast empire of Rome. Its first doctrine was eminently calculated to call forth the enmity of the natural heart. Christ crucified was to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness. Its first movements brought down on its friends persecution from all quarters. Pharisees and Sadducees, Jews and Gentiles, ignorant idolaters and self-conceited philosophers, all agreed in hating and opposing Christianity. It was a sect everywhere spoken against. These are no empty assertions. They are simple historical facts, which no one can deny. If ever there was a religion which was a little grain of seed at its beginning, that religion was the Gospel.

But the PROGRESS of the Gospel, after the seed was once cast into the earth, was great, steady and continuous. The grain of mustard seed "grew and became a great tree." In spite of persecution, opposition, and violence, Christianity gradually spread and increased. Year after year its adherents became more numerous. Year after year idolatry withered away before it. City after city, and country after country, received the new faith. Church after church was formed in almost every quarter of the earth then known. Preacher after preacher rose up, and missionary after missionary came forward to fill the place of those who died.

Roman emperors and heathen philosophers, sometimes by force and sometimes by argument, tried in vain to check the progress of Christianity. They might as well have tried to stop the tide from flowing, or the sun from rising. In a few hundred years, the religion of the despised Nazarene--the religion which began in

the upper chamber at Jerusalem--had overrun the civilized world. It was professed by nearly all Europe, by a great part of Asia, and by the whole northern part of Africa. The prophetic words of the parable before us were literally fulfilled. The grain of mustard seed "became a great tree; and the birds of the air lodged in the branches of it." The Lord Jesus said it would be so. And so it came to pass.

Let us learn from this parable never to despair of any work for Christ, because its first beginnings are feeble and small. A single minister in some large neglected town-district--a single missionary amid myriads of savage heathen--a single reformer in the midst of a fallen and corrupt church--each and all of these may seem at first sight utterly unlikely to do any good. To the eye of man, the work may appear too great, and the instrument employed quite unequal to it. Let us never give way to such thoughts. Let us remember the parable before us and take courage. When the line of duty is plain, we should not begin to count numbers, and confer with flesh and blood. We should believe that one man with the living seed of God\

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