

IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS

(MATTHEW 13:24-43)



Their future doesn't look very promising. After all, Jesus and his followers are just a small group of people in a little corner of Palestine, with few friends among the religious leaders or those in authority, and with a message that doesn't seem to be reaching very far.

Jesus wants his disciples to imagine what the kingdom of God will look like. He uses images, little stories or parables, to paint a picture of the kingdom of God and its future growth.

He talks about the mustard seed. His listeners know that the mustard seed is tiny, yet Jesus tells them that from the smallest of seeds comes a tree large enough for birds to build their nests in it. The kingdom of God is like that mustard seed, he says.

A second image hammers home his point. The kingdom of God is like the yeast a woman mixes in with flour. A small amount of yeast has a huge effect – it has the power to produce bread for a lot of people. The kingdom of God is like yeast, Jesus tells them.

Jesus's message is clear: the kingdom of God may have small, unimpressive beginnings, but like the mustard seed and the yeast, it will grow into something big and wonderful, and have an effect out of proportion to its humble birth. ■

SAY

“Lord, help me to hasten the flowering of God's kingdom of justice, peace and love by being a seed, a leaven, in the life of my church and my community. Amen.”

DO

Many feel excluded from or hurt by the Church. How can you be a grain of yeast in their lives that comforts, heals and builds up? The little things we do can make an enormous difference for God.

PRAY

Pray for yourself and for people everywhere that they will nurture the good that is in themselves and in others.

REFLECT

These are challenging times for the Church in Europe and in the West. Secularism is on the rise, fallout from the abuse scandals continues, many have given up the practice of the faith, while others who remain feel angry, confused and demoralised.

It can seem like the mustard seed is desiccating; that the yeast has lost its power. It can seem that the promise Jesus made to his disciples is turning to ashes, and that, far from expanding, the kingdom of God is contracting and even dying.

That is why it's important to hold fast to the promise Jesus made to his disciples and to us. Jesus tells us that the kingdom of God will flourish because it is God's will that it will flourish. And we are called to trust Jesus. We trust him by putting our faith in small things and in God's grace.

Lots of things are happening that are helping the kingdom to grow. Pope Francis talks of a Church that is on the streets, open, compassionate, inclusive. He is showing the way. Many Catholics are looking seriously at what it means to be the Church. They are realising that it isn't made up just of clergy and religious but of all the baptised. They are thinking about what needs to be changed in the Church and how they can be a seed or a leaven bringing new life to their parish. Just as the kingdom of God grew out of small things, they know that the little things we do can grow into something wonderful.

Think about those who have been a seed, a leaven in your life, those family members or others who shaped and inspired you in the faith. How can you be a seed, a leaven, in the lives of others? ■

LEARN

Even though there is a lot of evil in the world, God will have the last word.

Every good deed builds up the kingdom of God.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

See, I have God for my help.
The Lord sustains my soul.
I will sacrifice to you with willing heart,
and praise your name, O Lord, for it is good.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

Show favour, O Lord, to your servants
and mercifully increase the gifts of your grace,
that, made fervent in hope, faith and charity,
they may be ever watchful in keeping your
commands.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING Wisdom 12:13.16-19

A reading from the book of Wisdom.

There is no god, other than you, who cares
for everything,
to whom you might have to prove that you
never judged unjustly.

Your justice has its source in strength,
your sovereignty over all makes you lenient
to all.

You show your strength when your sovereign
power is questioned
and you expose the insolence of those who
know it;

but, disposing of such strength, you are mild
in judgement,
you govern us with great lenience,
for you have only to will, and your power is
there.

By acting thus you have taught a lesson to
your people
how the virtuous man must be kindly to his
fellow men,
and you have given your sons the good hope
that after sin you will grant repentance.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 85

Response:

O Lord, you are good and forgiving.

- O Lord, you are good and forgiving,
full of love to all who call.
Give heed, O Lord, to my prayer
and attend to the sound of my voice. (R.)
- All the nations shall come to adore you
and glorify your name, O Lord:
for you are great and do marvellous
deeds,
you who alone are God. (R.)

- But you, God of mercy and compassion,
slow to anger, O Lord,
abounding in love and truth,
turn and take pity on me. (R.)

SECOND READING Romans 8:26-27

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the
Romans.

The Spirit comes to help us in our weakness. For
when we cannot choose words in order to pray
properly, the Spirit himself expresses our plea
in a way that could never be put into words, and
God who knows everything in our hearts knows
perfectly well what he means, and that the
pleas of the saints expressed by the Spirit are
according to the mind of God.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
enlighten the eyes of our mind,
so that we can see what hope his call holds
for us.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL Matthew 13:24-43

(For Shorter Form Mt 13:24-30, read between
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A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Matthew.

>Jesus put a parable before the crowds, "The
kingdom of heaven may be compared to a
man who sowed good seed in his field. While
everybody was asleep his enemy came, sowed
darnel all among the wheat, and made off.
When the new wheat sprouted and ripened, the
darnel appeared as well. The owner's servants
went to him and said, 'Sir, was it not good seed
that you sowed in your field? If so, where does
the darnel come from?' 'Some enemy has done
this,' he answered. And the servants said, 'Do
you want us to go and weed it out?' But he said,
'No, because when you weed out the darnel you
might pull up the wheat with it. Let them both
grow till the harvest; and at harvest time I shall
say to the reapers: First collect the darnel and tie
it in bundles to be burnt, then gather the wheat
into my barn.'" <

He put another parable before them, "The
kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which
a man took and sowed in his field. It is the
smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown
it is the biggest shrub of all and becomes a tree
so that the birds of the air come and shelter in
its branches."

He told them another parable, "The kingdom
of heaven is like the yeast a woman took and
mixed in with three measures of flour till it was
leavened all through."

In all this Jesus spoke to the crowds in
parables; indeed, he would never speak to
them except in parables. This was to fulfil the
prophecy:

I will speak to you in parables
and expound things hidden since the
foundation of the world.

Then, leaving the crowds, he went to the house;
and his disciples came to him and said, "Explain
the parable about the darnel in the field to us."
He said in reply, "The sower of the good seed
is the Son of Man. The field is the world; the
good seed is the subjects of the kingdom; the
darnel, the subjects of the evil one; the enemy
who sowed them, the devil; the harvest is the
end of the world; the reapers are the angels.
Well then, just as the darnel is gathered up and
burnt in the fire, so it will be at the end of time.
The Son of Man will send his angels and they
will gather out of his kingdom all things that

provoke offences and all who do evil, and throw
them into the blazing furnace, where there will
be weeping and grinding of teeth. Then the
virtuous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of
their Father. Listen, anyone who has ears!"

>The Gospel of the Lord.<

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;

through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,

he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,

who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and
glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins

and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

O God, who in the one perfect sacrifice
brought to completion varied offerings of the
law,

accept, we pray, this sacrifice from your
faithful servants
and make it holy, as you blessed the gifts of
Abel,

so that what each has offered to the honour
of your majesty
may benefit the salvation of all.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The Lord, the gracious, the merciful,
has made a memorial of his wonders;
he gives food to those who fear him.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Graciously be present to your people, we
pray, O Lord,
and lead those you have imbued with
heavenly mysteries
to pass from former ways to newness of life.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.