

*He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches." He told them still another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough." – Matt. 13:31-33*

As I type this, my daughter is baking bread for tomorrow's Communion. Since we are virtual with our worship here in COVIDland, everyone is preparing and serving Communion in their own homes. And while some find this to be a loss of community and tradition and ritual, it is far more accurate to what Communion was meant to be. Communion, which was a metamorphosis of the Old Testament Seder meal which began the Feast of Unleavened Bread each year, was meant to be shared by families in homes. It was not until the early church usurped the ritual for weekly use that it moved out of the home and into the church proper. So as we share Communion as a family, we are more accurately reflecting its origin.

Yes, the original bread used in the Seder/Communion was unleavened (the Israelites didn't have time that first Passover night to wait for the dough to rise), but today we generally use leavened bread, which means it has yeast. And it doesn't take much yeast to leaven a whole lot of dough. Why? Because yeast grows! Just like the Kingdom of God.

As I type this, our brand new garden is growing alongside our house. We have always wanted a garden, and in our last house we had two. But our current residence doesn't have a place that is not always shaded or swampy, except a little dog run along the side of the house. So we built a new raised-bed garden there, and it seems to be flourishing. It is filled with plants that began as seeds in an egg carton to teach our 5 year old about plants. Now they are tomato, lettuce, herbs, and spinach plants. We didn't use all of the plants we began because there were too many of them for the little space. Why too little space? Because seeds grow! Just like the Kingdom of God.

Jesus has been using parables to teach about the Kingdom of God, parables about wheat and weeds, about nets and fish. Today He uses two, but with a common teaching; the Kingdom of God grows! Like seeds, where a tiny seed can become a huge tree, the Kingdom grows. Like yeast, where a tiny bit can leaven a huge amount of dough, the Kingdom grows. As we share this Kingdom with those around us, it grows and spreads to them, and from them to another and to another... And how do we share the Kingdom? By living as its citizens, using its language, modeling its morals, and sharing its joys and hope with those around us. When we do, it grows!

Let me give you one other parable of my own design that could fit this theme. We have 4 kids ranging in age from 21 to 5, so we know something about rearing kids. When they are born, they are so tiny and fragile that we think a strong sneeze may hurt them. But as we care for them, feed them, protect them, and teach them, they grow. They grow into men and women, independent people who then go and have kids of their own. Like the Kingdom of God, kids grow and spread and make more kids.

The Kingdom grows. Like seeds, like yeast, like children, it grows by the power of God. Our task is just to tend, nurture, and share it with others.

Questions to ponder:

What parable might you create to teach that the Kingdom of God grows?

How are you tending, nurturing, and sharing the Kingdom of God with others right now?