

Sermon Mark 4 26 34 3rd S after Pent Series B

Sermon: 3rd Sunday after Pentecost

Text: Mark 4:26-34

Theme: The Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed...

Goal: To know about the power of God's Word while His kingdom is growing.

Dear Friends,

Introduction: How did you become a Christian? Do you know an exact day or hour that you can say: At that specific time I was converted?

If you were baptized as a child, of course you can say: On the day of my Baptism I became a Christian; God accepted me in His Kingdom and wrote my name in His Book of Life. - Do you know the date of your baptism?

But if you became a Christian as an adult, it's difficult to say the exact moment of your conversion. Because when you are conscious about God's love in Christ and say: 'I believe...', God had worked through His Word in your heart before, giving you the faith. This is what about Jesus is talking in these two parables: How His kingdom comes to us and grows among us.

I – The mystery of the growing of God's Kingdom

"Jesus said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how."

The growing of God's Kingdom is a mystery like the growing of the seeds. If you have a little experience as a farmer or as a

gardener, you know that the seeds cannot remain in a packet or in a can inside the house or in the store. The seed needs to be spread, sown into the soil, so that it can grow. It needs soil, water and light. You cannot be anxious about its growth, but you need to wait the right time. You cannot harvest before it's ripe. *"Whether you sleep or get up, the seed sprouts and grows."*

The Word of God- The Bible - cannot be stored in your house on the shelf or under your bed. It must be sown: opened, read, shared, spread. Then it grows and becomes alive in your heart and in the heart of other people. It has power in itself with God's blessing and will sprout and grow. The Word of God is a Mean of Grace that works in our heart, cleaning it through the forgiveness of sin and giving us the true faith in Jesus as our Savior. *"All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head."*

Martin Luther wrote in the Small Catechism: *"The kingdom of God certainly comes by itself without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may come to us also."*

How does God's kingdom come?

God's kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity."

The Africa Bible Commentary says: "Human agents sow the seed, but they do not make it grow and so should not become impatient when it does not seem to produce results as soon as they would wish. God's sovereign purpose is still at work. God is in control."

(p. 1179) 'We cannot make the Word more effective than it is.' (Series B, p. 168).

What is our challenge in that first parable? To sow the seed of God's Word. This is the way His kingdom is growing!

II – The miraculous growing of God’s Kingdom.

In the second parable of our text, Jesus compares the Kingdom of God as a mustard seed. Have you ever seen a mustard seed? It’s a very small seed. *“Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds of the air can perch in its shade.”*

As you cannot see the growth of a seed, *“night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows”*, the growth of the church is sometimes imperceptible. But it happens and the church is still there. From the humble beginning at a stable to the top of the cross at Golgotha, the Kingdom of God was established. And since Pentecost it has been growing and will never stop to grow until the end of the days. ‘The Word that was sown in a little corner of the world (Jerusalem) has spread to many nations’, - to South Africa too. It was not easy for the first missionaries who came to South Africa. They faced the different tribes and cultures; many of them died because of malaria and other sicknesses. But “the Word has produced a great bush with large branches in which all sorts of people find refuge and rest’ (Series B, p. 169).

You can recall the story of your lives or of your home-church; we can recall the story of St. Thomas; you will see the reality of these two parables of Jesus in each case. - What is our challenge in this second parable? Again: It is to sow the seed of God’s Word, as small as it is. God is behind our work. He blesses the seed and makes it grow. This is the way His kingdom is growing!

Conclusion: There is a story about some missionaries in Africa that shows how God works, slowly, slowly, and in a very strange way... but He still establishes His Kingdom: (Old Africa, Issue # 22, p. 36): (see attached)...

Pastor Carlos Walter Winterle -Cape Town, 17 June 2012 -(Reading Service)