

Mustard Seed  
(Matthew 13:31-32)

Introduction:

1. In Matthew 9:35 a summary statement is given about the Lord's work.
  - a. His primary work was teaching and preaching.
  - b. He also healed sicknesses and diseases.
2. By studying:
  - a. His teaching we are able to know His will
  - b. His miracles of healing we are able to know that He is God's Son.
3. In our lesson we are concentrating on a subject that Jesus mentioned 3 times during His ministry -- "mustard seed."
4. By studying the occasions when Jesus mentioned mustard seed, we can learn some information that will help us as we search for a meeting place.
5. Let us first examine how . . .

Discussion:

- I. JESUS USED A MUSTARD SEED TO ILLUSTRATE HOW THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN WOULD GROW (Matthew 13:31-32)
  - A. This was the occasion when Jesus presented all of His teaching through parables (Matthew 13:34-35).
    1. In several of His parables Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to things that were familiar to the people in His audience (vs.24, 33, 44, 47).
    2. His purpose for doing so was to illustrate a variety of lessons that relate to the kingdom.
  - B. (vs.31-32) Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to "*a grain of mustard seed.*"
    1. A mustard seed is very small.
    2. However, when it is sown in the ground, it will grow into a large plant where birds can build their nests.
    3. Jesus was illustrating how the kingdom would be very small in its beginning, but with God's blessings it would experience great growth.
  - C. The Lord's teaching came to pass.
    1. Perhaps it will help us to review some additional information about the kingdom.
      - a. (Matthew 4:17) He said that the kingdom was "*at hand.*"
      - b. (Matthew 16:18-19) He spoke about the kingdom and His church interchangeably.
      - c. (Matthew 16:28) He said that the kingdom would be established during the lifetimes of those present.
      - d. (Mark 9:1) He said that the kingdom would come "*with power.*"
      - e. (Acts 1:8) He identified this power as the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles.
      - f. (Acts 2:1-4) The apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.
      - g. This was when the kingdom, the church, came into existence (vs.47).
    2. According to Acts 1:15, just before the kingdom was established on Pentecost, the Lord had about 120 disciples in Jerusalem.
    3. Let us examine what happened.
      - a. (Acts 2:41) On Pentecost about 3,000 souls were saved.
      - b. (Acts 2:47) The church grew daily.
      - c. (Acts 4:4) The number of believers included about 5,000 men.
      - d. (Acts 6:7) "*The number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly.*"
      - e. (Acts 9:31) Churches were established in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria.
      - f. In about 30 years the Gospel had been preached throughout the world (Colossians 1:5-6, 23).
    4. The kingdom had a small beginning, but it experienced tremendous growth.
- II. JESUS ALSO USED A MUSTARD SEED TO ILLUSTRATE THE POWER OF FAITH
  - A. On 2 occasions Jesus told the apostles that a small amount of faith would enable them to do mighty works (Matthew 17:20; Luke 17:6).

- B. The book of Acts shows how the apostles developed a sufficient amount of faith that they were able to perform great miracles.

Conclusion:

1. Jesus used a mustard seed to illustrate:
  - a. how the kingdom would grow
  - b. the power of faith.
2. Is there a connection between these 2 lessons?
  - a. The kingdom grew because God blessed the efforts of the apostles and other Christians as they did what the Lord wanted them to do.
  - b. Faith led the apostles and other Christians to do the Lord's will.
  - c. Consequently, God blessed their efforts.
3. The last 3 Sundays we showed that God will grant our requests when we ask, seek, and knock (Matthew 7:7-8).
4. As we ask, seek, and knock, let us remember these lessons that Jesus illustrated with a mustard seed.
  - a. God can bless a small beginning.
  - b. Faith is powerful.
    - 1) We cannot perform miracles today as the apostles did.
    - 2) However, faith will enable us to say, "*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me*" (Philippians 4:13).