

Dear Partner,

When Jesus was teaching His disciples how the kingdom of God functions, one of the parables He used was the one we commonly call the “parable of the mustard seed.”

Mat 13:31-32 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: (32) Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

Most of my life I have been taught by various ministers that the point of the parable is that it just takes a little faith to move the mountain. The trouble is, when I did my own research on the subject in the gospels, I could never find a single time when Jesus ever commended anybody for having “little faith.” In fact, I discovered just the opposite. Here are just two typical examples:

LITTLE FAITH WILL NOT STOP THE STORM

Mat 8:24-26 And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. (25) And his disciples came to *him*, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. (26) And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

LITTLE FAITH WILL NOT KEEP YOU FROM SINKING

Mat 14:28-31 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. (29) And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. (30) But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. (31) And immediately Jesus stretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

I could give more examples but what I found was this ... When Jesus was teaching about faith as a grain of mustard seed, He wasn't encouraging us to have “little faith.” No, He was teaching us how to have GREAT FAITH. To understand what He was saying it is important that we understand the type of mustard plant He was referring to. The type of mustard plant that grows in the Middle East is quite different from the one grown in North America. Our mustard plants are fairly small and remain simply “plants.” But there they grow to be actual “trees” some fifteen to twenty feet tall. Yet the seed the tree grows from is so small it is about the size of a single grain of pepper. It is not the size of the seed that determines how big the plant grows. It is the “image” within the seed that determines its size.

Every seed has an image within it. A single corn seed has the image of an entire corn plant, having a green stalk about six to seven feet tall, with several ears of corn on that stalk, and each ear having rows and rows of corn seeds. The IMAGE is much larger than the SEED. Over and over again Jesus taught us that the WORD OF GOD is like SEED that a man sows into the GROUND. We are the GROUND. Every Word of God has an IMAGE within it that if planted and nurtured in the human heart will produce the WILL OF GOD contained within the WORD. The easiest example of this is:

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

What is the image contained with this SEED of the WORD OF GOD? It is SALVATION seed. Untold numbers of men and women have been saved through the centuries because they planted this WORD of GOD, this SEED OF SALVATION into their heart. They believed it. They acted on it, and the harvest of SALVATION was reaped as they were born again.

Real mustard seed faith is the kind that receives the SEED of God's Word into the heart (the ground), believes it, continues in it, until the IMAGE within that SEED grows up to full harvest. It works the same for salvation, deliverance, physical healing, having your needs met, the salvation of your loved ones ... for EVERYTHING!

Mar 4:26-29 And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; (27) And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. (28) For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. (29) But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

The enemy is powerless against God's Word. He cannot nullify the power in the Word so what he does is focus his attack on the ground ... the soil in which the seed is sown. We are the ground. Notice what Jesus taught in Mark chapter four how the enemy stops the harvest of the Word of God:

Mar 4:14-20 The sower soweth the word. (15) And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. (16) And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; (17) And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. (18) And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, (19) And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. (20) And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive *it*, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

Notice three out of the four types of soil produced no harvest at all, yet the seed that was sown was perfect in every case. Satan uses every tactic imaginable to get us distracted from tending to and nurturing the seed of God's Word. We get so busy with the daily affairs of life there is little time to give diligence to the Word of God that is within our hearts. Like a distracted farmer's field, the weeds began to creep in and choke the tender plants until they finally produce nothing at all. Let us no longer be ignorant of Satan's devices. Let us be diligent in tending God's Garden, which is the soil of our own hearts. If we will be diligent in nurturing the SEED unto full maturity, we will reap the crop of God's perfect will every single time. That is true mustard seed faith. Sue and I love you and appreciate you. We thank God for your generous and giving heart. God bless you!

Your friend and co-laborer,

Gary Carpenter