



The Parable of the Mustard Seed and The Parable of the Yeast (Matthew 13:31-33)

Have you considered how the kingdom of God grows and assimilates in your communion with Him, in your community, and in your culture? Most ministries, including businesses, attempt to start big and eventually, they grow small. This is an example of *pretense*, which is the problem. However, the solution is *authenticity*. Authentic ministries start small and then grow large. This was Jesus' message in The Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32).

Authentic ministries have mustard seed growth: they start small and grow large (see Matthew 13:31-32). “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 your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches’” (Matthew 13:31-32).

Jesus threw the earthly truth of a mustard seed alongside the spiritual truth of the growth of the kingdom of God: His reign, rule, and order in the hearts and lives of people on this earth now and in the future. He noted the small size of the mustard seed: “Smallest of all your seeds” (Matthew 13:31). It was planted in the ground, almost unseen. Jesus' kingdom started small. Two thousand years ago, the expectation of the listeners was not unlike ours today. They had expected the Messiah's kingdom to start big. Jesus turned their expectations *upside-down*.

Jesus said that His kingdom would grow large, referencing the size of a fully-grown mustard plant: “Yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree” (Matthew 13:32). Although His kingdom started small with God coming down as a baby, it had grown to reach many nations by the time of Luke's writing of Acts.

Street Smarts for the Restoration Road

Is God prompting you to start a new ministry to advance His kingdom in you, in your community, and in your culture? Start small. Authentic growth is upside-down from the culture's motto, “Start big.” Proud hearts must be humbled; humble hearts must grow authentically with one another; and the people on the upside must reach those who are down. Communion kingdom growth with God starts small, in your heart (see James 1:21; 1 Peter 1:23; Luke 17:21). Community kingdom growth starts small with authentic relationships (see 1 Corinthians 3:6-7). Culture kingdom growth starts with reaching its

downhearted, one at a time (2 Corinthians 9:9-10). Would you like to see authentic kingdom growth in your communion, community, and culture? Start small.

Authentic ministries have yeast-like assimilation: inside out (see Matthew 13:33).

Too often, leaders in ministry attempt to assimilate others from the outside in without first being transformed themselves from the inside out. Jesus addressed this in The Parable of the Yeast: “He told them still another parable: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough’” (Matthew 13:33).

Assimilation is permeation and transformation. In essence, it is mixing throughout in order to change. Jesus painted the picture of a woman kneading yeast, or leaven, into the dough. After the yeast was mixed throughout the dough, the fermenting process could not be stopped. Jesus likened the earthly truth of the yeast to the spiritual truth of His kingdom. Once Jesus had inaugurated His kingdom on earth by coming inside it as a man, its transformation could not be stopped.

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Is God prompting you to start a new ministry to advance His kingdom in you, in your community, and in your culture? Work inside out in authentic kingdom assimilation. Communion kingdom growth with God starts in your heart and works inside out in your life (see Matthew 23:25-26). Community kingdom growth starts inside relationships and then works its way out (see Matthew 28:18-20; Colossians 4:5-6). Culture kingdom growth starts inside a culture, often with the least of these, and then works out (see Mathew 25:40, 45).

Conclusion

Would you like to see authentic kingdom growth in your communion, community, and culture? Start small and work inside out.