



## Gaining Kingdom Growth Mark 4:21-34

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Today, we will finish up Mark's account of Jesus' teachings through parables. Let us always ask "God, do we truly understand your Kingdom? Give us understanding to know the deeper truths and see us grow in You!" In verse 21, Jesus shares the purpose of a lamp and lampstand to shine as much light as possible. It was usually a small clay bowl made with a spout to hold a wick and containing a few ounces of oil that served as the fuel. The lampstand was found in common homes as a shelf protruding from the wall. Wealthier homes might have separate, ornate stands. So, what does this all mean? As we are thinking about our VBS Sports Camp here at our church, I want to tell you about God's work at other churches this past week. I pray we can be enlightened about our purpose as a church as we study about Kingdom growth. I really believe in the scriptures that says "Seek first His kingdom and righteousness, and all these other things will be added unto you." If we can celebrate God's Kingdom growth in other churches and around our community state, country and world; then we will also see much growth at FBC Cypress. We must always have the Kingdom perspective of gaining Kingdom growth first. Let us read this passage,

*And he said to them, "Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket, or under a bed, and not on a stand? <sup>22</sup> For nothing is hidden except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret except to come to light. <sup>23</sup> If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." <sup>24</sup> And he said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear: with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you. <sup>25</sup> For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away." <sup>26</sup> And he said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. <sup>27</sup> He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. <sup>28</sup> The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. <sup>29</sup> But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come." <sup>30</sup> And he said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? <sup>31</sup> It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, <sup>32</sup> yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade." <sup>33</sup> With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they*

were able to hear it. <sup>34</sup> He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.

**First, The Result of Spiritual AWAKENING is Communicating the GOSPEL to the WORLD.**

During Christ's earthly ministry things are hidden, but the day of the Resurrection on all has been revealed **Matthew 10:26-27** says "So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. <sup>27</sup> What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops." The purpose in keeping something hidden is so that one day it can be revealed. Jesus' teaching was never intended to be just for an inner circle of followers. **The disciples' RESPONSIBILITY was to communicate the gospel to everyone.** Our responsibility is to not have the most comfortable life now, the best secured jobs or academic scholarships now. Our greatest responsibility is to share the gospel with everyone we can. I remember leading a small college mission trip in Haiti and all we were doing there was sharing the gospel with people and loving them like Jesus. It was hard at first to be comfortable walking through the streets talking to people about the Lord instead of giving them invitations, giveaways, or anything else. We read in verse 24, **The spiritual RESULTS of Jesus' disciples is based on the amount of EFFORT they put forth.** They would reap as they had sown. The one who has learned spiritual truth and applied it diligently will receive even more truth.

**Secondly, The Result of Spiritual GROWTH Accomplished in Good Soil MULTIPLIES.**

In verses 26-29, this parable is recorded only by Mark and complements the parable of the sower by explaining in more depth the results of spiritual growth accomplished in good soil. The kingdom is to be present in the hearts of His people spiritually. In the future, as a literal earthly kingdom we read about in **Revelation 20:4-6**. "Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. <sup>5</sup> The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. <sup>6</sup> Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years." This 'new' heaven and earth is a more "renewal" than it is brand new that is like our life-renewal as Christ-followers. When the grain is ripe, the sower of the seed must harvest the crop. There are two possible interpretations of this unexplained parable. It could refer to the entire scope of the kingdom from the time Jesus sowed the gospel message until the final harvest in the future. **Christ's disciples**, such as you and me, **CONTINUES the work of presenting the GOSPEL that would PRODUCE a harvest.** The other interpretation pictures the gospel working in lives. After the gospel is presented, **the Word of God WORKS in the individual heart**, sometimes slowly, **until God REAPS the harvest in that individual and SAVES them.**

The parable of the mustard seed in verses 30-32 is again concerned with the kingdom's present manifestation in the person of Jesus. This parable of the mustard seed pictures the kingdom of God beginning with a small influence and then becoming worldwide in its scope. I have had the chance to speak the gospel and

share my faith in many places such as funerals, weddings, sports games, high school classrooms, or on the street where there are unbelievers. When I would think the impossible, God would make the impossible—possible and allow me to be an atmosphere changer. We can change the atmosphere wherever we are if we are Spirit-led, live by faith and the Word of God.

*Thirdly, **The Result of Spiritual-LED Believers BENEFITS People Around Them.***

Mustard seeds come from a common black mustard plant. The leaves were used as a vegetable and the seed as a condiment. It also has medicinal benefits. The mustard seed is not the smallest of all seeds in existence, but it was the smallest in comparison to all the other seeds the Jews sowed in Israel. This mustard shrub is not a tree but has been known to grow as large as 15ft. high and to have the properties of a tree. The tree represents the sphere of salvation, which would grow so large that it would provide shelter, protection, and benefit people. Even **unbelievers are BLESSED by association with the GOSPEL and the power of God in SALVATION.** The second time flying out to Montana for a Summer of ministry through the NAMB, I took the cheapest flights that had three connecting flights to get there. I remember flying out from Portland, OR to Helena, MT with enough confidence to tell a frantic lady that God was with us and He plans to keep us safe through this flight. He is with me. **Believers have a FAITH that benefits those around them. 1 Corinthians 7:14** says, *“For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.”*

This **conclusion** is of Mark's account from samples of Jesus' parables. On that particular day, Jesus spoke to the larger crowd only in parables. Jesus did not force the crowd to believe. So, they could make no decision to follow Him since they did not understand what He taught. Jesus spoke to His disciples explaining everything. Jesus gave understanding of what is necessary to believe, but also gave them eternal comprehension. If you are understanding this today, chances are God is calling you to salvation. He is calling to His Kingdom. Or if you are understanding this today, then it means you are already part of His Kingdom. What happy and glorious day to be a part of God's Kingdom and see others join us!