

## The Kingdom of Heaven is like.

Last week we talked about what the Kingdom of God is like.

Now, before we begin today, I need to ask you, do you understand how it is that the kingdom works within our souls? Do you understand that it is not a distant entity, but it is part of who we are that connects us with God? We are all on a journey of understanding our place with God, and it is OK to ask where does that fit with me, or how is that relevant?

There are five stories about what God's kingdom is like. The treasure and the pearl speak about us discovering how wonderful it is to be a part of God's Kingdom. So much so, all we have and are, are insignificant. You could say we are sold out for Jesus. The story of the yeast is about how important God's sees us in his mission of grace to the world. As the yeast makes the dough rise so we are the difference by being God's presence in our world. The story of the net is about God gathering us all up, those who have lived for God's kingdom will enter into His Heavenly glory and this glory is beyond explanation, though some have tried.

But the first Parable is about the mustard seed that is planted and grows into an amazing tree that becomes a habitat for birdlife. We see Jesus using another story about a mustard seed being like faith. This is significant, not because Matthew seems to like mustard, but because Faith is a gift given to us by God. Some people look at unanswered prayers and say that the person who prayed does not have enough faith. This is so untrue. Faith is not measured by what we do successfully for God but by who we are standing before God and only He knows the depth of our hearts.

If God gives us faith, as a gift like the seed of wheat, in the scripture last week. He plants that seed of faith deep within our souls. Now, when you plant seeds, what happens? The seeds die; but in last Sunday's text, the seed grew good wheat. Now, there is another amazing thing about seeds; they transform into something else more beautiful than a small hard roundish thing. It grows and takes the form of a plant. The tiny mustard seed transforms into a very big tree. Faith grows like this too. And as it grows it becomes something more, it becomes strong and secure, even for others. Children can swing from its branches, it brings shelter and shade, it becomes a habitat for many creatures, and it continues producing more seeds that can be made into mustard paste. Now mustard paste flavours and enhances other foods; it is the will of God to use us as his mustard paste. God brings us all together to produce a beautiful flavour for the palate of the world, so the world will know that he is good.

The kingdom of God is like this, as we seek God, drawing near to him, praying and seeking to do his will in our lives, our lives grow to be more Christ-like. So, what is it to be Christ-like?

I will share what Peter says:

**2 Peter 1:3-9** His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through the knowledge of **Him who called us** by His own glory and excellence. Through these He has given us His precious and magnificent promise. **This is like the treasure Jesus speaks of**, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature. **Let us just stop for a second, how do we become partakers in the divine nature. The answer is we become like Jesus here on earth as he is in Heaven. Just look to the next person and say, wow you look so much like God. Athanasius tells us we were made in the likeness of God,**

**sin and corruption robbed us of this likeness and gave only death. Jesus returned so that we could recover this likeness, this means being the partakers of His nature.**

This is because you have escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

For this very reason, make every effort **to add to your faith**, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. **Why should we do this, because he has kept his promise, and these are the things he has given us from his precious magnificence that grows our faith.** For if you **possess (allow these things to take control your life)** these qualities and continue to grow in them, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**And if you keep them, they will lead you into being valuable and productive in understanding what our Lord Jesus Christ truly means.**

**Friends, this is the kingdom of God, it is like a tree growing within us, it means something individually, but it also means in us, as God's church, he is transforming us from that mustard seed into a bountiful tree that tells the world just who is making you grow, so they will see just what the Kingdom of God is like and they will know that it is to God's Glory that you are the planting of the Lord and have become Mighty Mustard trees of righteousness. Isaiah 61:3.**