



This week we consider the parables of the Mustard Seed and the Yeast, found in Matthew and Luke. (Mark mentions the mustard seed but not the yeast.) We will focus on Luke's account in 13:18-21. The parables of Jesus can be categorized as parables of God's Kingdom, of Grace, and of Judgment. Today we consider a parable of God's Kingdom.

Tell of a time when you were part of something small that grew into something much larger. Alternately, share your experiences of baking bread or what you put mustard on.

Read Luke 13:18-19

- The passage begins with the word, “therefore,” linking it with what comes before it. How does this give us a hint about what the point of this parable might be? To whom was this parable first addressed?
- Luke’s gospel contains more about women than any of the other gospels. What might be the link between the story of Jesus healing the crippled woman and the parable of the mustard seed?
- Where does this gospel say the man planted the mustard seed? How does this differ from Matthew 13:31 and Mark 4:31?
- How is the Kingdom of God like a mustard seed?
- Who is the man who planted the mustard seed representing in this parable?
- Who do the birds represent? See Daniel 4:10-12, Ezekiel 17:5-6, 23, and Ezekiel 31:5-6

- What did the woman do with the yeast? What might be the reason for so much flour? See Genesis 18:6. What is the significance of the same quantity of flour in both accounts?
- Who does the woman in this parable represent? What is the significance?
- How is the Kingdom of God like yeast?



Application

- If this parable is about how God's kingdom grows, what might be the reason Jesus told it?
- If the point of this parable is that the kingdom of God is more in the small and seemingly insignificant things than the large, grand, and glorious. How does that encourage you?

V. Digging Deeper

- When Jesus wanted to describe the Kingdom of God, he did not speak first about kings and armies, power and victory, or even heaven and eternity. Instead, he pointed to two of the smallest, most ordinary things imaginable—a tiny mustard seed and a bit of yeast mixed into flour.
- Leaven usually is an image of evil or corruption. See the “yeast of pharisees” in Mark 8:15. However, here Jesus uses it positively. Even as yeast causes fermentation that releases carbon dioxide, so to it symbolizes the breath of God—the Holy Spirit at work within us.
- If we wanted to convince the world that God was at work, we might point to cathedrals, revivals, miracles, or movements that changed history. Jesus points to a seed that nearly disappears in the soil and yeast that vanishes into dough.
- The Kingdom is like yeast mixed into three measures of flour until all of it is leavened. Notice that the yeast disappears. It has become part of everything. That is what grace does. God does not merely improve one corner of our lives while leaving the rest untouched. The Kingdom seeks to permeate everything; our work, our families, our conversations, our grief, our failures, our hopes. Nothing is left outside God's transforming love.
- Our task is not to manufacture the Kingdom. Our task is to consent to it. To make room for the seed. To welcome the yeast. To trust the Gardener. To trust the Baker. To trust that even when we cannot see what God is doing, God is faithfully bringing Christ to life within us.

VI. Prayer

- *Spend time in prayer together:*
- Pray that we might let God do His good work within us and build His Kingdom through us. Affirm that God who began a good work within us will bring it to completion.

