

How His Kingdom Comes, Part 2

Luke 13:18-21

The kingdom exceeds all of our predictions. And that stands to reason, if we've had false assumptions to begin with. We can't predict anything rightly. So, the kingdom exceeds our predictions. A grain of mustard seed is small. It's really small. If you cast it into a garden like this guy did, it would be impossible to find it again. It's not even as shiny as a needle in a haystack. It's black. It's small and invisible once you throw it on the ground. Yeast as well, it's actually, yeast is actually a, a, singled cell fungi. It has relation to the mushroom. Hmm, didn't know that. Takes 20 billion of those little single cell fungi to get a gram of yeast. So small that a bit of yeast would be almost impossible to see.

If I took a single grain of mustard seed and put it in your hand, without you knowing what that seed was and I ask you to predict the outcome: Tell me the yield that's gonna come from this little thing. The size of the plant. Or if I gave you yeast

particles. Ask you how much flour that could affect. What it's good for. For you, that'll be impossible to predict, what's gonna, how that yeast is gonna affect anything.

Packed into that tiny grain of mustard seed is an outsized power. There's energy in that tiny little thing to produce this massive tree. Internal power potential within the seed, and that potential actualizes, externally, visibly in a tree that's large enough, and foliage thick enough, for birds to find a home. To be hidden and safe. Starts out small, accomplishes what is very great.

Likewise, leaven hidden in flour relatively invisible to the naked eye. It's potential to leaven 50 pounds of flour, and let's not limit it there. It can affect any kind of, number of measures of flour. The invisible process of fermentations: we call it leavening. It spreads through the whole mass. As that leaven gets in there and does its work, basically is chewing up sugars and then releasing carbon dioxide gas. It causes these bread loaves to rise and expand. It improves the flavor and, as we all know, there's aroma that's pleasing and inviting. The

batch size enough to satisfy 150 people. That's irrelevant the batch size.

The leaven works. Does its work. Again, what starts out so small, seemingly invisible, it has the potential, that God put in it, to accomplish what is superlatively great, to become visible, noticeable to all. God put the power and the principle of maturation into the seed. It illustrates how the death of Christ can bring life to so many. He put the power and the principle of saturation into the leaven.

He illustrates how the life of the spirit transforms all the citizens of the kingdom of God. Jesus said, John 12:24, "Truly, truly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth" and does what? Dies. It remains alone, but if it dies, "it bears much fruit." The power, the principle of life. In his life, his seed planted, his life, death, resurrection, that has, brought life to all of his people.

1 John 3:2 says, "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared, but when he appears, we

shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is." "We've been united with him in his death", like his, Roman 6:5, "We shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his."

The principle of maturation. The principle of saturation. 1 Corinthians 15:42, "So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what's raised is imperishable; it's sown in dishonor, it's raised in glory. It's sown in weakness; it is raised in power."

Since God so often subverts our expectations. Since he delights in ignoring our assumptions and since his invisible, unseen work always exceeds our predictions, folks, this needs to shape the way we think about the way God works in the world. Isaiah said, Isaiah 55:8 and 9, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

We need to abandon fleshly assumptions. We need to reset our predictions biblically. We need to set expectations

according to God's power. According to his revealed will. Listen, that's kingdom reasoning. That's kingdom thinking. Takes us to a necessary consequence, which is a fourth point. Point number four, the kingdom defies our limitations. The kingdom defies our limitations. Try to put limitations on it. Like an old wineskin surrounding new wine, it'll burst right out. Kingdom defies our limitations. kingdom of God is like a grain of mustard seed. Man took. So discarded. Grew. Became a tree. Birds of the air made nests in its branches. It is like leaven that the woman took, hid in three measures of flour until all was leavened.

In contrast to the restrictive impulse of the synagogue ruler, whose impulse was to bind the conscience falsely, even having the audacity to use a Bible verse. Narrow the scope, impose limitation, that is not in keeping with God's plan to expand his kingdom and saturate the world with kingdom influence. The size of the kingdom is massive and all-encompassing. Its influence is thorough and universal. That is completely lost on this synagogue ruler, his adversary friends. Come on work days to get healed, okay, not on the Sabbath day of rest.

Kingdom of God exceeds all limitations. The birds of the heaven is a metaphor. This hints at Gentile inclusion in the kingdom. It's not only one kind of bird that nests in the branches of this tree, it's all the birds of the air that come to take refuge and find rest and make a home. So, it's not just Jewish birds that fly into that tree, but the birds of the nations as well. And in this parable, just stop and think about that, folks. Jesus envisions you and me, us Gentiles, half a world away, separated by two millennia now, he's thinking of us.

In leavening three measures of flour, he assures us that in this kingdom there is no worry about running out of food. In the kingdom, resources are plentiful. Abundant. There's plenty to go around. There's enough to feed everybody and the spirit of the kingdom is a spirit of generosity. Completely unlike the synagogue ruler and a lot more like Jesus. Spirit of the kingdom is a spirit of generosity, and mercy, and giving.

Think about your own life. Think about your own impulses. And the real question here is, do you belong at this table? Do

you take refuge in the branches of this tree? Look what's coming next in the text. Skip ahead to verse 26. He's speaking to the Jews, those who consider themselves a sure in, in the kingdom, because they're connected to Abraham. And he says, you're gonna begin to say, verse 26, We ate and drank in your presence. Hey, you taught in our streets. We're buddies. We're pals, Jesus. "And he will say to you, 'I tell you, I don't know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!'"

That's how he describes the synagogue ruler there, imposing limitations, binding consciences, falsely and unlawfully using the law, "workers of evil". "In that place," where I'm gonna cast you into, verse 28, "there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." And it especially so, not just the pain of the separation, not just the pain of hell, but look, it's also the pain of what you lost out on when you see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God. But you yourselves cast out, and people will come from East and West and from North and South and recline at the table in the kingdom of God.

That just, that just rubs it in, doesn't it? Not everybody is gonna be nesting in these branches. Only those whose growth comes from the true seed of the gospel. Why is that? Because God's power for growth is only in the true seed of the true gospel. Not everybody's gonna be sitting at that table. Only those who are transformed by Christ. Only those whose lives are saturated by his word and his spirit in the heart, by the Holy Spirit renewing the inner life, which leads to a transformation of the outer life.

The transforming power has to come from God. Leon Morris said this, said it this way, "The dough does not change itself." That crippled woman is a true daughter of Abraham. She didn't change herself. She was changed, acted on from the outside, and no matter how she was judged by others in her own time, Jesus knows she certainly belongs there. She found refuge in the branches of this tree. She has a place reserved for her at the table in the kingdom. Synagogue ruler and his wealthy friends, no, no, matter how religious, how important, how wealthy they appeared on the outside. They proved adversaries to Christ.



Those birds that they would have excluded from the kingdom, keeping their own place, well, guess what, their place is handed over to somebody else. They're gonna be disappointed. They, have, find they have no place at the table. They're gonna be outside looking in. What about you, my friend? Are you trusting in Christ? Are you resting in the refuge of the kingdom of God or are you trusting in yourself? Are your days, and nights, and weeks, and weekends, and months, and years, are they occupied with you busy building your own tree? Looking to yourself and your own strength, your own money, to provide a refuge for yourself. Don't do that my friend. Trust in Christ.

Trust in Christ alone. And if you claim to trust in Christ: Is the power that leads to growth evident in your life? Is the saturating power of the gospel, and the spirit of God, and the word of God actually doing its renewing work in your life internally? Is it changing the things that you love and that you hate? Is it changing your affections to conform your affections to the affections of Jesus Christ? Or are you pretty much the same?

Is it transforming your life, so that you don't have to tell everybody that you're saved, you're a Christian, but other people come to you and say, hey, what's different about your speech? Your behavior? Is it visible? Is the visible connected to what's internally a reality to you. So important, because a transforming life is evidence of a power that comes only from God. The dough does not change itself, right? It's called the fruit of the spirit because it's only spiritually produced by him. Many people try to mimic it. Many people claim it. Only kingdom citizens have it.

Fifth point: The kingdom fulfills our dominion. The kingdom fulfills our dominion. The kingdom of God actually fulfills what God set forth to accomplish from the very beginning. I'd like you to turn to the first chapter of the Bible, Genesis chapter 1, just, just briefly, and follow this with me. Starting in Genesis 1:27, we read, "that God created man in his own image and the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."

That's genesis 1:27. Look at verse 28. "God blessed them. And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the

earth and,' then this, 'subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the heavens, over every living thing that moves on the earth.'" What does the word kingdom mean? What does it describe? If not the exercise of dominion.

The kingdom of God refers to a universal dominion. A dominion that is expansive. A dominion that is not limited. Universal dominion is supported by an unlimited bounty of God's generosity, his abundant goodness. Look at verse 29, God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that's on the face of all the earth, every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food." Whole lot of flour, right? That is an abundant self-perpetuating food resource, right there.

Can you imagine all the, in a pre-fall world, all the pleasing aromas that would come out of mom's baking? All the delicious tastes. All the fruit pies. Accomplished all the work that God intended to do, having taught and equipped Adam to join in the work. Having given Adam the honor of representing him by bearing his image and then exercising dominion over all that he made, making Adam a regent of God on earth.

God sent him into his work, entering, into his very first full day. Which was a day of rest. Look at Genesis 2:1 to 3, "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, all the hosts of them. On the seventh day God finished his work that he had done. He rested on the seventh day from all his work that he'd done. So God blessed the seventh day God made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation."

You know what's missing from that text by intention. You go day one, two, three, four, five, and six, and what does it say? There was evening and there was morning the first day, the second day, the third day, fourth day, fifth, sixth. Where is the boundary placed on the seventh day? It's not there, is it? God intended Adam to enter into his work, in a day of rest. He intended his work to be a work of rest.

All of the exercise of dominion, subduing the earth, and all the rest, it's rest. But the first man, Adam, by sinning he forfeited the ability, the opportunity, to fulfill that creation mandate. By sinning he would no longer be able to exercise

dominion in the sphere or in the condition of a Sabbath rest. And now, turn ahead to Genesis Chapter 3, in verse 17. Genesis 3:17 to 20. This is the reality that we know. This is what we were born into.

This is how we live after the fall, in our fallen condition. We live under a curse to Adam. He said, verse 17 chapter three, "because you've listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face, you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken, but you are dust, and dust you shall return." That's how we live. That's what we experience.

And prior to salvation, that's all we know, is the pain, and the toil, and the labor, and the hurt, and the sorrow. But thankfully, because of Christ, that's not the end of the story. At the macro level, the gospel tells us that this last man, Jesus, he fulfilled all that God had given him to do. In his

earthly life, he fulfilled all righteousness. He obeyed everything to perfection.

He was obedient to the letter, and the spirit of the law, and the attention of the law. All the ten commandments in thought, word, and deed. Never committing a sin of omission. Never committing a sin of commission. He loved God with all his heart, soul, strength, and mind. He loved his neighbor as himself. He did that perfectly, without a moments break ever. He was so obedient. He was obedient to, the whole mission that God sent him for, is to become obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross.

He was perfectly obedient to God's perfect law. He's perfectly righteous, internally, externally. He finished all the work that God had given him to do. Came to save his people. He came to restore them to that Sabbath rest, that God had intended and planned from the very beginning. I want you to see that. So go to the other side of your Bibles, Hebrews chapter 4.

Hebrews chapter 4. This synagogue ruler, he finds himself condemned in the Book of Hebrews; Hebrews 3, Hebrews 4. He's clearly identified, even in our texts, by Luke, as an adversary. He's one whom Jesus put to shame. He failed to understand the Sabbath in terms of rest. He imposed his restrictive mentality on that woman and really tried to bind the consciences of the entire synagogue, congregation. Kept them wrapped up like a boa constrictor. Squeezing the life out of them.

That woman had been bound by a spirit of oppression, but this man kept a whole congregation bound and oppressed by a spirit of slavery. This man's mind is under the dark spell of a very false view of God. A satanic view of God. Namely, we can trust that God is good. He failed to see God's good. He failed to trust in God, as a God of freedom with a generous heart of liberality and goodness. He's enslaved to the law.

He's driven to find his own righteousness. His is a righteousness of human works. And as you know, you can never work enough, to erase your stain. All of our righteousness are what filthy rags before God, right? Because his own heart was bound, it's the only way he knew. The only leadership he could

provide was into greater degrees of bondage, tighten the chains of enslavement. Seal the lock on the door that bound them in prison.

So when Jesus came, he entered, bringing liberation to the people. He taught freedom in the kingdom of God. He demonstrated freedom by liberating the woman, illustrating freedom by the largesse, and the abundance, and the rest, in these two parables about the kingdom. And they invite the sincere seeker to find refuge in the kingdom, to renewal and transformation through kingdom power to enjoy the Sabbath rest of the people of God.

That's what it says in Hebrews 4 verse 1, "Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened." Faith marks the difference between the crippled woman and the synagogue ruler. The freed woman and the enslaved ruler.



Faith separates those who hear the message of the kingdom parables and those who do not. Look at verse 3, "For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, 'I Swore in my wrath, they shall not enter my rest', although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: 'And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.'"

Skip ahead to verse nine, "So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience." That's the rest that Jesus lived in. It's what he worked for. It's what he taught to everyone. It's what he called them to strive for. That is the rest that he offers in his teaching. That is the nature of his gospel, to cease our striving, to stop working under these false impressions of God and his law.

And to enter into the Sabbath rest that is, on, offer for all the true people of God. Folks, this is the offer for you. If you're not yet a Christian, it's an offer for you to enter into

the rest of salvation. Stop making your own way. Stop worrying about all this little stuff of the world. Stop building your portfolio, building your wealth, building your company, pouring energy, after energy, after energy, into things that are gonna die when you're dead. Repent of your sins. Believe in the finished work of Christ for you. He atoned for your sins through his death on the cross, and he leads you in a life of true rest by his lordship, if you'll believe. Let's ask him for that very thing, shall we?

Father, we're so grateful to see the sending of your son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who continues to astound us with truths about the kingdom. And honestly, only in this hour, only as you know, that only the half is known. And it's just a fraction of what is here. There's so much to meditate on, in these kingdom parables, and our Lord Jesus was so pleased to use common everyday things to illustrate and hide, in them, such profound truths. Like a common seed or common leaven that contains incredible power and energy.

So, his word contains such power, and energy, and life. Oh father, help us to be faithful, obedient, to spread this seed

and this leaven. Let it be manifest in our own lives that we are growing into maturity and that our lives are being transformed by this gospel. Let that be an attractive and consistent witness to the message that we have to bring to a lost and dying world.

Give us favor with people that we speak to. Let their hearts go before us and let their hearts be malleable, soft. Prepared by your Holy Spirit to receive the good seed of the kingdom. To have that good leaven worked into their lives, that they are truly transformed through and through. And one day, we as a people from every tribe, tongue, and nation, will be before your throne. Casting our crowns before you, because you are worthy. We love and thank you in the name of Jesus our savior, Amen.