

Our Vision: The Seed Or The Plant?

Franklin Church of Christ
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PM Worship

Introduction:

Jesus wanted His disciples to have a vision of His kingdom. He wanted them to see before hand how great it would be. Only with such a vision would they work to make the kingdom successful. To impress in their minds the kingdom's coming success, He told them about the mustard plant (**Matthew 13:31-32**). That vision would guide their work. Examine Christ's vision. Then ask, what is our vision?

Discussion:

- I. The kingdom would begin as a mustard seed.
 - A. Jesus was well aware how seemingly insignificant was the beginning of His great kingdom.
 1. First, Jesus Himself only appeared to be a man from Nazareth. By reputation, nothing significant could come from Nazareth (**John 1:46**).
 2. Second, He was beginning among the Jews, a beaten people, servants to Rome.
 3. Third, He was working in depth with only 12 men. No doubt there were others who learned from Him. But He did not have any mass advertising and glitzy campaigning. In fact, He even tried to turn attention away from His work, asking some who could provide His greatest testimonials to keep quiet (**Matthew 8:4; Mark 5:43**). One time, He practically pushed the masses away by disturbing them with difficult sayings (**John 6:60**). By the time Jesus left the earth, He had only 120 followers (**Acts 1:15**).
 4. Fourth, these leaders which Jesus developed were nothing special. In fact, several of them were uneducated fisherman (**Acts 4:13**).
 - B. The kingdom began insignificantly. In fact, the beginning may have been quite discouraging for the handful of leaders. But, Jesus did not want His disciples fooled by His kingdom's inauspicious beginning. He had a vision that was larger than the seed.
- II. The kingdom would grow to be the mustard plant.
 - A. Within a few months, several varieties of the mustard plant will grow to be nearly 12 feet tall. Perhaps you can see why Christ would use this picture to plant His vision in the minds of the disciples. The start would be small, the end product would be great. This was the very vision that God demonstrated through Ezekiel in **Ezekiel 17:22-24**. In that chapter, God had explained the complete destruction with which Babylon would conquer Judah for their treason against Him. But, in these verses He provides a glimpse of hope. He notes a restored kingdom. He speaks of insignificant beginnings but grand progress. While this passage no doubt speaks of restored physical Israel, the ultimate fulfillment of this grand kingdom is found in the very kingdom about which Jesus spoke in **Matthew 13:32**.
 - B. That is exactly what has happened. In **Acts 2:41**, the kingdom began with 3000 being added to the 120. Then by **Acts 4:4**, the number had grown to 5000 men, not counting women. Multitudes of both men and women were continually added to the Lord as seen in **Acts 5:14**. In **Acts 8** a persecution arose in Jerusalem, but that only added fuel to the fire. Those who fled Jerusalem went everywhere teaching (**Acts 8:4**). In **Acts 10**, salvation went to the Gentiles. The church went into Samaria, Africa, Arabia and Europe. Churches were established all over the known world and even in the capital of the world: Rome. In Rome, the church reached into the very household of Caesar (**Philippians 4:22**).
 - C. In **Colossians 1:6**, Paul claimed that the gospel was bearing fruit throughout the entire world. The church's enemies attested to this in **Acts 17:6**, when the rioters brought Jason before the city rulers, they referred to the Christians as "these who have turned the world upside down."
 - D. That was Christ's vision of the kingdom for His disciples. He wanted them to know growth was coming. He wanted them to be preparing for it and to be part of the work that would cause it.
- III. We are a part of Jesus' vision.
 - A. Here we get to the crux of the reason we need to look at this passage. It is great to know that though the kingdom began insignificantly, it exploded and grew beyond man's ability to ask or think. But if we stop there, we miss how important this passage is. We need to understand that this story is about us. We are part of the mustard plant. We are part of Christ's vision.

- B. Jesus did the work to establish His kingdom, but since that time, He has used men to spread His gospel and bring people into the fold. That is what He expects from us. We are His ambassadors carrying out His vision for His kingdom. We must not say, "Well, the mustard plant is big enough now." We need to keep in mind the very next parable Jesus used to describe His kingdom. In **Matthew 13:33**, Jesus said the kingdom was like a little leaven put in a large measure of meal. That leaven gradually spread through the entire lump of meal. Christ's kingdom is to spread through every part of the world.
- C. We must carry on the vision that Jesus has for us. We must work to spread the kingdom throughout middle Tennessee. We want the plant to continue growing. We want the birds of the air to come nest in the shelter of God's kingdom. We want the leaven to spread throughout the entire amount of meal. We know, as Paul did in **Romans 10:13-15**, that whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved. They will be translated into the kingdom of Christ. But, that will never happen unless we send forth people to teach them. Unless we carry on the vision.

IV. What is our vision?

- A. Now, we have to ask ourselves a question about the Franklin Church of Christ. What is our vision? That is, what can we see as part of our future. If we do not envision where we are going, we will never get there. When you see this church what do you see?
- B. In many ways, I see a mustard seed. It is very easy for me to think about the numerous churches throughout the U.S. and think that we are extremely significant. After all, the average church has only 50 people or less in it. But, brethren our numbers are insignificant when we realize that we are smack in the middle of an area with hundreds of thousands of people. We are a mustard seed. In ten years, do you see us still being this same mustard seed? Or do you see a plant?
- C. Over the next five years, can you see the members of this congregation drawing closer to one another? Can you see this church as a big family? Can you see this family protecting, strengthening and encouraging one another? Can you see this family drawing in others who want to have their sins forgiven and want to be a part of the love we have for one another? Can you see us baptizing another person this year? Can you see us baptizing 10 others this year? Can you see us having so much work that we have to bring in more full time workers as Jerusalem and Antioch had? Can you see us baptizing 150 people in the next five years? Can you see more and more of our members getting involved in the lives of new people? Can you see more and more of our members talking and visiting with guests, following up on prospects and teaching the gospel? Can you see us filling this building and having to build another one and then another one and then another one? Can you see us supporting preachers on every continent in the world? Can you see us blazing a trail of evangelism and soul saving in Middle Tennessee? Can you see us striking a blow at Satan, by the grace of God? Can you see the mustard plant here in Franklin? Isn't this what you want for Christ's kingdom in Franklin.
- D. This is where we are going. The Franklin Church is a part of Christ's vision. This is not our vision; this is God's vision for us. We will not let it pass us by. We all have to see this vision. We all have to see this future. If not, we will get mired down in today's trivialities and we will only be a seed. If you have trouble seeing the plant, remember **Ephesians 3:20-21**. God can do exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think by the power working in us.

Conclusion:

We need to keep this vision in our minds. Every day we, as individuals, need to consider, what do I need to do today so we can accomplish our vision? What can I do, so we will be the plant and not just the seed? We will be the plant, because God is on our side.