

# The Mustard Seed - Mark 4:30-32

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, amen. It's great to see all of you and be here together as we worship the Lord through song, through baptism, through now studying His word and hopefully.

And He was saying, The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil. And he goes to bed at night and gets up by day and the seed sprouts and grows.

How? He himself does not know. The soil produces crops by itself. First the blade, then the head. Then the mature grain in the head.

But when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle because the harvest has come. And he said, how shall we picture the kingdom of God or by what parable shall we present it?

It is like a mustard seed which when sown upon the soil, though it is smaller than all the seeds that are upon the soil, yet when it is grown, it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and forms large branches so that the birds of the air can nest under its shade.

[ 1 : 08 ] With many such parables, he was speaking the word to them. So far as they were able to hear it and he did not speak to them without a parable. But he was explaining everything privately to his own disciples.

Let's pray. God, you have revealed yourself to us in many ways, but primarily this morning, Lord, we want to recognize the revelation of who you are, your nature, your very existence, the exact representation of your character through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Thank you for revealing yourself to us, unworthy servants. Lord, I pray that as we continue to look at some parabolic teaching that's shrouded and wrapped in a mystery, Lord, that you'd help us to understand the beauty of that mystery.

Lord, that you have made known exactly what you desired to make known among us and that you have withheld exactly what you desired to withhold in our hearts and in our minds.

That there is a mystery and a wonder to who you are that is beautiful. Lord, I pray we would double down on that which we know to be true and we would plunge in exploration in that which we are wondering about.

[ 2 : 37 ] Concerning who you are, your ways, your thoughts, your mind, give us a grasp of the kingdom, that we would see your kingdom in its fullness as it works out across the span of time and space, that we would be your servants, your citizens, your subjects, to bring forth your kingdom here and now on this earth and in your beautiful name we pray our King Jesus. Amen.

Well, we have here this morning our two parables. We're gonna deal with them both. We're gonna spend a little more time on the mustard seed parable. We have two parables that find their place in the Gospel of Mark as the first parabolic teachings of Jesus.

So what we see in chapter four of Mark is the seeds of the kingdom of God. So I'm gonna give you the overarching context so far in the book of Mark.

We're not gonna read the whole book of Mark, obviously, but it's important for us to see where we find ourselves in chapter four. The Gospel of Mark is the Gospel of action. Jesus is on a mission. He acts in power and he acts with purpose. This is Jesus in Mark.

In chapter one, the very first words that Mark writes in the Gospel are the actual words, the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, where other gospels in their beauty and uniqueness lay out a genealogy or build up to the story of Christ. You know what Mark does? And the beginning of the Gospel. Here we go. We're starting right now. And what happens in chapter one is amazing. Jesus comes on the scene and he preaches repentance immediately. He calls Peter, James and John as disciples. He exercises a demon. He heals Peter's mother-in-law and he heals the crowds in Galilee and all of the other gospels. Jesus does none of that in the first chapter.

[ 4 : 39 ] In chapter two, Jesus heals a paralytic. He calls more disciples and then he debates the Pharisees about the Sabbath. In chapter three, he heals on the Sabbath. He calls and empowers the disciples to go out under his authority and he draws a large crowd unto himself, a crowd so large that he actually gets in a boat to get away from them so he can have some space. And through chapter four, where we find ourselves this morning, Jesus begins his teaching ministry. And he teaches about the kingdom of God through parable. Now, Pastor Jay did a great job a couple of weeks ago starting off with what a parable is. He taught us that a parable is an indirect narrative form of teaching truth, that instead of just laying the truth out in an explicit manner, which Jesus does sometimes as ministry, when he teaches through parable, he wants an indirect form of teaching truth. He wants to engage the mind. He wants to use allegory and symbolism to convey the truths about God's kingdom.

But we find ourselves in when we enter into a teaching that's parabolic in nature, this idea of mystery. And I want to talk quickly about mystery because these two parables of the growing seed and the mustard seed both have to do with mystery. Now, a mystery in Scripture is a divine truth that's only made known through a revelation. When Scripture uses the term mystery, it's speaking of that which can only be known if it's revealed. And what we see here is that the Christian faith in the Bible as portrayed through the terminology of mystery is full of truths and revelations that operate around this idea that some mysteries are no longer a mystery because they've been revealed and some mysteries remain mysterious, but nevertheless true. What do I mean by this? Well, some mysteries that have been revealed to us like Scripture clearly proclaims and prays God, first and foremost is the identity in the person of the Messiah. All throughout the old and New Testament, there's this mystery that's spoken of, this mystery of the man that would come and redeem Israel and redeem God's people back unto himself. And it's always remained a mystery until Christ comes. And now we know the mystery made known, Jesus Christ. The plan of redemption is no longer shrouded in mystery. It's made clear to the person and work of Jesus Christ, which is why, which is why two people just got baptized and use something that we call the gospel hand. We came up with this at kids camp a couple of weeks ago and it's great. I'm so glad to see people are using it and it's making an effect. It's awesome. Here's the mystery made known. Ready? Jesus lived perfectly, died sacrificially, rose victoriously, forgiving me of my sin if I repent and believe.

There's the mystery, no longer a mystery, fully known. But there are some mysteries that have yet to be revealed. The bodily resurrection, the bodily glorification. What does that exactly look like? It's a mystery to us, but we plunge in with faith and trust God with these things.

The trinity, we know it to be true. It has impacts on our lives and we ought to believe it is true, but it's still a mystery. The mind of God, the end times, these things we know are true, but God and his sovereignty has chosen to shroud them so that only his perfect knowledge can have access. Book with me at Mark 4, verse 10 and 11. We find ourselves in context here.

[ 8 : 27 ] Jesus begins teaching in parable and he speaks of the kingdom of God and here's what he says. He tells them a parable of the sower. We all know the parable, we don't have time to dive into this, but the sower spreads the seeds and the seeds grow or die or get choked based on the terrain that they find themselves in. And the parable obviously is teaching this, that faith in the gospel can bring true faith, but there's a mystery in this parable. And the mystery is this, what is true versus false conversion? How do we know? How can we identify what's true and what's false? Jesus gives us some ways to identify, but there's a mystery that we will never know.

And it's this, there's no exact way to tell what's true faith. Only God has the eyes to see the heart of man. And here's what it says after Jesus teaches this parable. As soon as he was alone, his followers along with the 12 disciples began asking him about the parables.

The parables been told to the masses. Disciples are included and it says this, that once he's alone with his disciples, they've pulled them to the side. He tells them in secret, he reveals the mystery and it says this verse 11, he was saying to them, to you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God. For those who are outside, everything comes in parables. What Jesus is speaking here is he's allegorizing the condition of the mind and the heart of the saved and the unsaved. That we as we come to Christ gain the mysteries of the kingdom of God, those who are outside of thinking of God that have not embraced the true mystery that saves Jesus Christ, they see the world in parable. They see God in parable.

But this is beautiful that to you, to my disciples, we have been given the mystery of the kingdom of God.

So what is this mystery? The mystery in us. Three ways that the mystery of God either revealed or unrevealed at this point, we ought to interact with these things. Mystery in us, first through faith, we gain, we gain a full knowledge of the word Christ and thus God. The mystery of Christ, through faith, we gain that full knowledge. I can know Jesus fully, relationally. He's the word, he's the Christ, he's the God. Second, through faith, we seek further understanding of the known God in all of his ways. And the reason that we have to add this on, we can gain a full knowledge of Christ, but the secondarily with mystery, we have to seek further understanding. My thoughts are not your thoughts, my ways are not your ways, says God. So we seek a further understanding.

[11:20] Anselm said this famous line, he said this about the way in which we seek mystery and truth. He said, faith, seeking understanding. And the world has flipped this understanding. And if things make sense and I can prove it, then I will believe. Brothers and sisters, it is not the way of faith.

We trust in our God fully. And out of that trust that, that seed that will grow from faith comes the understanding of our God in a beautiful mystery. Let's come to our God in faith. And thirdly, through faith, all three pursuits of mystery of God come through faith. We wait for the final revelation of all things and all mysteries and everything will be revealed. So through faith, we gain, we seek, and we wait when we interact with God and his mystery. So in Mark four, we see three seed parables. And all three of these seed parables, the parable of the sower in verse 26, the parable of the growing seed in verse 30, the parable of the mustard seed. Jesus starts his teaching ministry in the gospel of action. And here's what he does. I want my people to hear.

I want them to process and think and use the mind that I've given them to see the kingdom of God played out. What is the kingdom of God? And so all three of these parables teach an already, but not yet mystery about the kingdom of God. God is on the throne. He's reigning right now.

He is king over all things. Now the kingdom of God is here. We have access to it. We are living in it, but it's not yet. It's coming. The fullness, the consummation of God's eternal reign. So let's look at the parable of the growing seed first. 20 verse 26. And he said, the kingdom of God is, and there's our cue that what Jesus is teaching is supposed to give us and glimpse or an image into what the kingdom of God is. The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground.

He sleeps and rises night and day in the seed sprouts and grows. He knows not how. Wow. The earth produces by itself first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear, but when the grain is ripe at once, he puts in the sickle because the harvest has come.

[14:07] This is a parable that's supposed to teach us about the kingdom of God. What is the kingdom of God? Why doesn't Jesus just say, here's what the kingdom of God is, and now you're some parables to help you understand what I taught. He speaks to them only in parables, and then explains to those who are in the know the disciples. But here's what the kingdom of God is when you look at the start of Genesis at the end of Revelation, the picture we see from the whole of Scripture, the kingdom of God is best described as the cosmic reign of Christ over all things.

Christ, reigning on high with the crown, with the scepter, with the robe, with the throne, over all things. The kingdom is made up of a king, like any kingdom is, and that king is Jesus.

And like any kingdom, there's a king on the throne who has royal subjects under him. These are the saints, you and I. So the kingdom is made up of a king, it's made up of royal subjects.

God's kingdom, the kingdom of God also transcends worldly jurisdiction, which is why Jesus told Pilate right before he was sentenced to death, my kingdom is not of this world. And the Jews and the people of the day looked to Jesus and they said, we want a Messiah who will be the king of this world, who will dominate the Romans, who will come in and conquer our enemies. That is the true king. That's the true kingdom of God, a physical manifestation with physical ramifications of power and political prowess. That is a king. And Jesus says, the kingdom is not of this world.

But what ramifications does this kingdom of God have in us and in the world? Well, the power and effects of God's kingdom can be advanced in the earth on the world. This is why when Jesus came in Luke 11 to heal and to heal the sick, he says this, if I cast out demons with the finger of God, listen to this, if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. So there are snippets of God's kingdom that can be felt and experienced in the world through the power of Jesus. As he reigns, he gives his power and demonstrates.

[ 16 : 31 ] And lastly, the kingdom of God can be and is manifested by its citizens. That the kingdom is displayed in the world through the kingship of Christ in our lives.

That the saints recognize who's on the throne, who's the king. And in response to this acknowledgement of Jesus is king over my life and over the world and over all things. My life is filled with servitude and obedience to him. And I then through the power of the spirit and submission to my king, bring the heart and the morality and the ethos of the kingdom into the world. Love, generosity, kindness, truth, judgment. That's why Jesus asks us, the disciples, that you would be empowered to do this. Luke 11, when he talks about the Lord's prayer, which is really the disciples prayer, he says this, when you pray, say, Father, hallowed be your name.

In other words, start off your prayer with a recognition. Hallowed means the highest order, the holiest of holy names. Start your prayer with an acknowledgement that Christ is king, that he is holy. Place him in the throne on high. And when you place him in the throne on high, there's what he says immediately following. Pray this, Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. But the natural outworking of my recognition that God is holy, holy, holy on the throne is that your kingdom would come in my life and in the world. And so through prayers like this, we empower, the Lord empowers us to bring the kingdom on earth. And we see that manifested through acts of faith, AKA some of the greatest ways I see the kingdom brought into the world.

The glimpse of the kingdom of God here on earth is what we just experienced. People trusting in Jesus, all their heart, to the point where they would say, I want to follow Christ with reckless abandon. I will follow him to the ends of the earth and I submit myself to him as Lord and they get baptized. Thank you, Oswin and Paige for giving us a glimpse of the kingdom, wherever you may be.

So the heart of this parable, the growing seed, this look closer at it, the heart of this parable, the meaning lies in God's divine shadowed working. That when we see this parable, we should ought to look at it this way. That there's a man that scatters seeds and the man who scatters the seeds is important here, we'll talk about it in a second. But the parable that Jesus presents is this, the kingdom of God is a man that scatters seed and it doesn't say he's a farmer, it says he's a man, but there is some implication, we can talk about that at a later time if you want.

[ 19 : 36 ] But here's what happens, the man scatters the seed and in verse 27, look what happens, this is not normal for an agricultural practice. He sleeps and rises night and day, okay, and the seed sprouts and grows. He knows not how. In other words, the Jesus is pating here is there's been seed that's been scattered and a man sleeps and wakes up and sleeps, wakes up and checks the seed and it starts to grow. And the man that says knows not how, in other words, how is that seed growing? Why did you spread the seed if you didn't expect it or know that it would grow? Jesus is being very pointed here.

The seed is scattered, the man wonders how is it growing, we have no indication that he waters it, that he cultivates it, that he feeds it, he just watches. Now here's the most important words of the parable, this is the key to unlocking the mystery here, verse 28, the earth produces by itself.

Now the earth is symbolic of the power of God, the will of God, the mysterious ways of the Lord that we seek to know but see it manifested even in the absence of our understanding.

And here's what happens, the earth produces by itself independent of the man, first the blade, the blade sprouts, Jesus gives the order, the blade comes out, then the ear of the harvest, then the full grain in the ear, I think of a stock of corn, I don't know why, but when the grain is ripe at once he puts in the sickle because the harvest has come.

When it says by itself we ought to see this, that Jesus is pointing to the kingdom of God growing out of a seed that's been scattered, yes it grows out of the ground and the man knows not how, which is analogous of our knowledge, of how our knowledge, the world's knowledge, the powers it be, the knowledge of all of us, we look and we say how is the kingdom of God growing, what is happening in the world and in the realm of spiritual principalities, how is this happening? And the point is this, the parable is teaching us that the kingdom of God grows only by the power and working of God's will, that it is not I who cultivate the seed of the kingdom, that it is not us, it is not even the church, it's not even the strongest prayer warrior, the most diligent, evangelist, it's not the power of us that causes the kingdom of God to spread and grow, we know not how, but what is true about this parable? Jesus as he enters the world in chapter four of Mark the first time he teaches the people, he says this, the kingdom of God grows and it's by the power of God and what's going to happen in the book of Mark, I wish we could just survey the whole book right now, it's so amazing, he goes

from this point and he goes from city to city, power, miracle, healing, strong teaching, rebuking, he shows incredible power,

[ 22 : 57 ] Mark is the gospel of power, at least the way I think of it, and by the end of the gospel in 16 chapters, boom, we have seen a clear presentation of the power of God manifested in the world, and what Jesus is trying to get the people to see, he's preparing them that by the time I am gone, I send to the Father, I will have taken you and the world by a whirlwind, and that the seed of the power of God by the kingdom will have grown and everyone will say, how did that happen? That was Jesus, that was God, the Son of God. And the point here is not to break us down and cause us to think we're insignificant in the kingdom of God, but it is true that Jesus intentionally makes the farmer or the man an ineffective agent other than the spreading of the seed in the growth process.

Write this down in your heart or in your journal, the kingdom of God will advance with or without us. It will grow with or without our knowledge. Do you, do I, do we, the church trust in God's divine will and His divine working?

Do we trust in the mysteries that have been revealed, aka the gospel, the plan of redemption, the word of God, all the things that we can know fully? Do we trust in those things enough to propel us into strength in our walk and our resolve when it comes to the mysteries?

Why did God do this in my life? Why is He allowing these people to suffer? Why is my friend, my person not coming to Christ, I've shared the gospel with them for years? Why is my family member stuck in their sin? Why can I not escape my pattern of sin? All these mysteries that we may not have answers to in this life, here's what the parable is teaching, the kingdom of God grows and there's a harvest that's going to be produced and our faith must be in the kingdom of God, aka the king Jesus and His plan. The kingdom of God will advance with or without you.

[ 25 : 21 ] I want to focus really quickly on the last part. Notice, it's not just the seed grows and the man knows not how, but when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle because the harvest has come, a clear echo to Joel chapter 3, a book about the coming judgment of God and a call for the people to repent and fast.

Now I want to read this to you. This is a direct echo. Joel 3, here's what God says, let the nations stir themselves up and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat. For there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Verse 13, here's the echo, put in the sickle for the harvest is ripe. Jesus is quoting the end times, the judgment that's to come. Go in, tread for the wine press is full, the that's overflow for their evil is great. The sickle's going to come to those whose evil is great, those without Christ multitude, multitudes in the valley of decision.

Love that imagery, the valley of decision for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon are darkened and the stars withdraw, they're shining the Lord, roars from Zion, he utters his voice from Jerusalem and the heavens and the earth quake. Listen to the awesome and terrifying scene of the end times, the judgment seat, that those without Christ will be put in darkness and will be judged accordingly, but their sins deserve. But notice the last part, this is for us churches, this is for you, this is our promise, this is our hope in the Lord, but the Lord is a refuge to his people, a stronghold to the people of Israel.

The kingdom of God will advance with or without us. Next is the parable of the mustard seed, look at verse 30. And these go hand in hand, Jesus barely takes a breath in between, it says this and he said, how shall we picture the kingdom of God or by what parable shall we present it?

In other words, Jesus is rhetorically asking the crowd, I've told you what the parable is like, but remember, those who are not Jesus' disciples see everything in parable, they have no knowledge. So he tells them another parable, he says, okay, what else should I compare it to? Let me give you another picture and here's what he said.

[ 28 : 02 ] It is like the grain of a mustard seed, which when sown on the ground is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, 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. The heart of this parable's meaning lies, not necessarily in size, but in contrast. The growth and advancement of God's kingdom is subtle and often overlooked. This is what the mustard seed has to teach us, yet the kingdom of God rises to power and magnitude that all other kingdoms cannot compare. It's about a contrast that even though it looks small and it's beginning, it becomes the greatest, the largest, the most abundant and beautiful of all. It's the mustard seed.

But here's the thing, but the mustard seed, the mustard seed is not, according to modern day botany, it's not the smallest seed in nature. The orchid seed is much smaller. There are other seeds

that have been found that are much smaller. Also, the mustard tree could barely be termed a tree in the literal sense. It's a massive bush-shaped tree-ish looking tree, but it's not the largest tree. I've been to the Redwood Forest, whole mama. Ever driven through that big boy? It's beautiful.

That is a massive tree. So clearly is Jesus teaching lies. No. Unless I'm mistaken in the first 30 years before Jesus' ministry, somehow he made it over to the Americas and visited the Redwood Forest and then went all the way back way ahead of his time, Jesus never saw a Redwood tree. Here's the key. The mustard seed was well used as a Jewish proverbial expression of something tiny and often insignificant. The mustard seed, yeah, small, tiny.

An example would be in the cultural context, would be something like when we, a lot of Moody Aviation students here, we fly up in the air, even if you travel commercial and you look down, you say, wow, the cars, the people look like ants down there. What are we saying when we use that phrase? We're saying they are tiny. It looks like the smallest thing I can think of. Now, if we're going to pick on Jesus for his cultural example, we should pick on ourselves. We shouldn't use ants when we go up into the plane. We should use the copomorphic eclipocegurus, which is called a fairy fly in common terms, which is the smallest insect that's been discovered.

[ 30 : 49 ] So the next time you go into an airplane, you look down at people if you want to be that harsh with your critical cultural analysis of what Jesus said, the mustard seed, no. But wait, the mustard seed is not the largest tree in the world, but in Middle Eastern culture, it is a relatively large tree that everyone would have recognized as, whoa, the big tree. What Jesus has done is he's made a culturally relevant illustration that reaches the heart.

He's not making a scientific declaration. They even read as I was studying this, that there's a critical article on this that was accusing Jesus of lying to all these people. And in the article, the person said, Jesus wasn't a botanist. How could he even know? To which I respond, yes, but he is the creator of every single thing ever. He supersedes botany.

So Jesus knows all things, but he uses, and this is something that we need to take in and realize, but Jesus, the great teacher, the rabbi, he reaches people where they're at. He uses the relevance of culture and experience to convey a lesson and an image that reaches the heart. If you're in here today and you've got someone you're witnessing to, or someone that you're teaching or discipling, or want to grow in their faith, use real world examples, pull people in, use things that stretch our imagination and allow us to tie truth with illustration. Thankful Jesus is a great teacher.

So why does he use the mustard seed? Again, it's a proverbial expression of something tiny and insignificant. So what Jesus is doing is he's pointing to something, and he's pointing to, and this parable is this. I'm going to ask a question here. What is seemingly insignificant and seemingly small in wonder? How about the birth of a baby boy in a stable in the tiny town of Bethlehem that barely evens on the map? How about the death of a rabble-raising rabbi on a cross?

These are insignificant things. Yeah. Here's what Jesus is pointing to. Praise God. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the mustard seed. That the kingdom of God is ushered in through this victorious, sacrificial life, death, and atonement of Jesus Christ on the cross. The gospel is the mustard seed. When Jesus says the tiniest, what you wouldn't think would do a lot, that wouldn't mean a lot.

[ 33 : 46 ] Me, everything I've done. He did great things. Yes, but everything is seemingly insignificant that goes down into the soil. And unlike the growing seed parable, the point of the parable is not on how it grows, but it is on the size and the contrast to which it grows.

And here's the reality of what the parable is teaching. God's kingdom advances in harmony with the power and the work of the gospel.

That the mustard seed, when it's planted, gives way to the largest, the biggest, the most glorious and abundant tree. If we want to see God's kingdom advance in our lives, in the world, and in the church, what we ought to do is focus on the origins, the gospel.

This is why we focus everything in ministry. We ought to, on Jesus' perfect work to redeem His people. Notice in the parable, it says this, when it is sown, when it is sown, when the mustard seed, when my seemingly insignificant birth, life, death, when it's sown in the ground.

When it is sown, speaks of the ushering of God's kingdom to the arrival of Christ. Matthew 3, verse 2, this is what John the Baptist says, just before the kingdom of God is ushered in through the coming of Christ. John the Baptist says, repent, turn from your sin for what?

[ 35 : 26 ] For the kingdom of God is at hand. It's ushered in when Christ comes. And here's what's also amazing about this parable. If you look at it again, look at verse 32, when it is sown, when

Christ comes, it grows up and becomes larger than all of the garden plants and forms large branches so that the birds of the air can nest in its shade. If the tree doesn't just grow to a magnificent size, we can say, wow, the kingdom of God is amazing. Look what Jesus did. It's more than that.

It's not just what Jesus did. It's what the kingdom of God now brought to us does. Yes. What does the kingdom of God do? It says the birds make their nest in it.

And here we have another echo. Ezekiel 17, Jesus knows the word, he knows prophecy. It says this, listen to this. The Lord God says, I myself will take a sprig from the lofty top of the cedar and I will set it out. I will break off from the top most of its young twigs, a tender one.

And I myself will plant it on a high and lofty mountain on the mountain height of Israel. Will I plant it that it may bear branches and produce fruit and become a noble cedar and under it will dwell every kind of bird in the shade of its branches. Birds will sort and nest.

This is talking. This is a prophecy of the coming kingdom of God. The salvation of God portrayed as this beautiful tree that the birds can come in and nest. Now we can look at the birds and I read many people that had this interpretation. We can take this a couple different ways. I'm just going to give it to you. The point is that God's kingdom provides a place for us to live and to be comforted and to have refuge and shelter specifically through the salvation that's offered through Christ. But it may also indicate the opening of salvation to the Gentile world.

[ 37 : 26 ] That we get to now go, where do we land? There's a tree. Let's nest there. He's grafted us in. More likely and in conjunction with that interpretation, I think the birds nesting the branches signify also that the kingdom of God exists to offer spiritual rest and refuge to everyone that trusts in Christ. Build your nest in the kingdom of God. Not in the trees of the world, not in the high lofty mountains and peaks of grandeur that the world has to offer, but recognize and identify the kingdom of God and build your nest, your life in that tree.

What this is pointing at? Have you made your nest in this tree through the gospel? If you're in here, you don't know Jesus and you are wondering about what in the world this guy's talking about with the gospel, with his gospel hand, isn't that for kids? No, it's for all of us.

If you need to hear the gospel, I pray you'd hear it. I pray that the Spirit would open the eyes of your heart, that God would draw him, you unto himself, as Jesus says, that you would recognize that building your nest in anything other than the kingdom of God leads to death and suffering.

Make your nest in the kingdom of God through the gospel next for those of us who have made our nest and are dwelling in the tree, the tree of life, the kingdom of God. If you have made your nest in that tree, the question to you is, are you upkeeping your nest? Are you tying together the strands to make sure your nest stays together? Are you digging deeper into the tree, securing yourself in the tree? Are you doing that through the promises of God, knowing and trusting in them in the primary agent of kingdom work, namely the church? Are you involved with the body of Christ? Are you working with the body of Christ to give glory to the King on high Jesus? Do you feel safe, secure, and comforted by God's sovereign reign over all things, forces, or powers? Trees are a symbol for the kingdom of God in Scripture. We see that in Mark. We see that in Ezekiel. We see it in Jeremiah and Isaiah that talks about Jesus as the root shoot in branches of God's kingdom. In those days and at that time it will cause a righteous branch, typically the last part of the tree to sprout out, the highest part, that righteous branch will spring up for David and he shall be executed justice and righteousness.

Isaiah 11, 1, there shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, the first part of the growth there. Isaiah 11, 10, in that day the root of Jesse. I love this. You know what these three images?

[ 40 : 19 ] Okay, Jesus is the root of Jesse, the line of David that's going to produce this King that's going to reign eternal. Jesus is the root of that. He's the shoot of that and he's the branches, aka salvation is entirely accomplished by the Messiah. It's all him, all Jesus, the root, the shoot, and the branch.

He does it all. This is why we preach and believe and practice our faith in this, that we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone. It's not a result of our works.

This is also why Jesus is called the author and perfecter of our faith in Hebrews. He wrote our salvation out. He worked it out and he finished it. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom there will be no end. So finally we'll finish this.

What should it mean for our lives as citizens in the now and not yet kingdom of God? What does it mean for me to live in submission to him as his subject in his kingdom? John Calvin once wisely

said, it is the task of the church to make the invisible kingdom of God visible.

It's our duty through the power of the indwelling spirit to bring the kingdom of God to others, to demonstrate it in our lives. Parables are given to us as a picture of what life is like in the kingdom of God. This is why Jesus teaches in parables. All of them create a lump sum of what it's like in the kingdom. Christ is the reigning king, not ourselves. Is Christ king over your life?

[ 42 : 21 ] Have you submitted your time, thoughts, energies, passions, desires in every waking moment to him? Are you Lord over your own life? Do you sit upon your self made throne of prideful vanity? I know I do often. And I have to repent and get off my throne and bow at the feet of Jesus, King Jesus.

Secondly, we are his loyal subjects. That's what it means to be citizens in the kingdom of God. And as loyal subjects, we follow his commands. A loyal subject doesn't do what's right in his own eyes. The king knows what's best for his kingdom. And we are set out to do his will, not deviate from it. Over 20 times in all of Scripture, God formally implores his people, subjects of his kingdom, ready for this to quote, keep my commandments. I am king. I declare. I know what's right. I know what's best. Follow my commands. This is why Jesus raises the bar even higher and says, if you love me, you obey my commandments. Are we doing what is right in our own eyes? Thirdly, the kingdom is immeasurable and penetrable and immovable. Hebrews 12, 20, this is a picture of the kingdom. Listen to this. Let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken out of the truth that we know that the kingdom cannot be shaken. We stand firm on the rock. We stand firm in the tree. We nest in its branches. And here's what he says, the author of Hebrews and thus because his kingdom cannot be moved, let us offer to God acceptable worship with reverence and awe to things that a king of kings deserves reverence and awe to bow in submission and worship of him because his kingdom is impenetrable. Fourth, the kingdom has no physical borders. This kingdom is made of all those who have been redeemed by the blood of the lamb, the mustard seed that produces the mustard tree, the growing seed that produces the crop. The kingdom of God is made up of more than just Spokane, fourth memorial, my family, me. It has no physical borders. The kingdom of God is for all those who have been redeemed by the blood of the lamb. We join in with the heavenly congregation from all time and all places to worship our king. I think right now it's a good application that we ought to take time.

Buy yourself if you're single, with a friend if you're single, with your spouse if you're married, with your kids if you have them to lift up our persecuted brothers and sisters all over all the world, especially my heart thinks of Afghanistan right now and the thousands upon thousands that are being persecuted and killed because of an evil that is taking over the land again.

We demonstrate kingdom conviction when we get on our knees and lift up our fellow heavenly citizens. And fifthly and lastly there is a standard of living in the kingdom.

All of the parables of Christ come together again to display what life is like in the kingdom of God. The moral heart of God is on display, the justice of God is on display in the parables, the love of God is on the display in the parables, the role of Christ as redeemer and teachers on display. You are called to embody the currency of truth and love that the kingdom of God is made up of. We have to read the parables and say how I live for him. A couple stories in the parables that point to some things that give us a moral tooth to bite on to, to live with. And here's a couple run to God, your gracious father, as a prodigal sinner. I'll let you figure out what parables I'm alluding to. Rejoice when others run to God, your father, after being a prodigal.

[ 46 : 11 ] Love and care for those who are different from you and in need, metaphorically beaten and robbed on the side of the road. Recognize the debt you have been forgiven and forgive debts owed to you by others. Avoid self-glory and instead beat your chest and say, God be merciful to me as sinner.

Build your life on solid ground by dedicating your every thought, deed and word to Christ's likeness. Assess your spiritual condition and repent of sin before seeking to advise your brother or sister about their sin. Use your time, energy and talents to advance the kingdom of God in the world instead of wasting everything in fear and apathy. And finally, recognize the kingdom of God grows and grows and grows by his will, by his power, by his sovereignty. And we have the privilege to be citizens of that kingdom. God, I pray that we would see your kingdom as something so much bigger than just a picture of heaven, than just a picture of Christ even on a throne. I pray we would see your kingdom as the fullness of your working from all time. From the beginning of creation, your kingdom reigns. And when Jesus comes, he ushers in this kingdom where he sits on the throne,

that as Jesus empowers us to the Helper, the Holy Spirit that we are made into saints and thus subjects, servants of you, King Jesus. Give us the eyes to see those who are oppressed. Give us the eyes to see those who are suffering. Give us the heart that loves other people, that shows mercy and grace. Give us the boldness to proclaim truth and to stand for truth. And it's the world that's saying truth doesn't exist. I pray that we would be kingdom people empowered with kingdom power for your glory, that your kingdom, not my kingdom that I build in my pride and sin, but your kingdom would be extended and felt and manifested in the world today. God let your power reign. Use your church. Thank you for your glory and for the seed of the gospel. In your name we pray. Amen.