

# The Mustard Seed

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Preacher: Rev Donald M Macleod

- [ 0 : 0 0 ] I get back to last week's passage, Mark chapter 4. Mark chapter 4. Mark chapter 4.
- I know this is now almost our third week in the same passage. I was going to apologise for that, but no, I know that's foolish because God's word is God's word and is living for us.
- And we come to the end of our section looking at, as we said to the boys and girls, what God's kingdom looks like. Let's be encouraged to return back to God's word. Mark chapter 4.
- Reading the whole passage once more together. Let's hear the living word of God. Again, this is Jesus. Again he began to teach beside the sea. And a very large crowd gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea.
- And the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. And he was teaching them many things in parables. And as teaching, he said to them, listen, behold, a sower went out to sow.
- [ 1 : 0 7 ] And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil. And immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil.
- When the sun rose, it was scorched. And since it had no root, it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns. And the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain.
- And other seed fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold. And he said, he who has ears to hear, let him hear.
- When he was alone, those around him, the twelve, asked him about the parables. And he said to them, to you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God. But for those outside, everything is in parables, so that they may indeed see, but not perceive, and may indeed hear, but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven.
- And he said to them, do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? The sower sows the word, and these are the ones along the path where the word is sown.
- [ 2 : 2 5 ] When they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. And these are the ones sown rocky ground, the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy, and they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while.
- Then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, but the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, the desires for other things, enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.
- But those that were sown in the good soil are the ones who hear the word, and accept it, and bear fruit, thirtyfold, and sixtyfold, and a hundredfold.

And he said to them, is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket, or under a bed, and not in a stand? For nothing is hidden except to be made manifest, nor is anything secret except to come to light.

If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear. And he said to them, pay attention to what you hear. With the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you.

[ 3 : 42 ] For to the one who has, more will be given. And from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And he said, the kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground.

He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows, he knows not how. 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. And he said, with what can we compare the kingdom of God?

Or what parable shall we use for it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which when sown on the ground is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, yet when it's sown, it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.

With many such parables, he spoke the word to them as they were able to hear it. He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples. He explained everything.

[ 4 : 53 ] And so on. Give praise to God for his holy and his perfect word. Let's join together in a word of prayer. Let's pray. Lord God, we come before you this day and we humble ourselves before you.

We confess that as we come just now, we come with so many distractions, perhaps, in our hearts and in our minds. We come to this place with an unworthiness, perhaps, if not an unreadiness, to worship you fully and totally.

We come to this place with sinful distractions, but also we come to this place often, Lord, with distractions that are not sinful, but which still keep us away from fully concentrating on your word.

We bring just now to the throne where we find mercy and grace. We bring just now the burdens of this past week, the anxieties, the stresses, the strains that ever may have taken place in our own private lives, our family lives, in our wider world around us.

We bring just now before you, Lord, the burdens and the responsibilities, perhaps, of this coming week. We know we come to this place as people, as individuals with so many burdens, so many worries.

[ 6 : 14 ] we know there are some here today, we are sure, who have brokenhearted this past week, who, because of various situations in their own lives, various situations they find themselves involved in, are heavyhearted today.

Lord, you alone know what is going on as it were behind the scenes. For we come just now as a distracted people, perhaps as a broken people, perhaps just now as those who are crying out for help and crying out for love, crying out for peace, crying out, Lord, for the gentle, cool streams of living water that come from Christ and from him alone.

We come to you as a poor people, as a suffering people, as a needy people, and we come to you, the holy God, the unchanging God, the God who was from all time and is to all time, the God who is perfect in all that you say and all that you do.

There is no uncleanness, there is no darkness to be found in you. In you is perfect light, perfect glory, perfect peace, and your perfection, it casts out all imperfection in its way.

As we come just now before you, we are so aware of our imperfections before you, a holy God. But we come today and we confess our sin, we confess our weakness, we confess, Lord, that before you we have no right and no ability to stand in and of ourselves.

[ 7 : 50 ] We come this day and we plead not ourselves, we plead not any of our actions or any of our works, but we come today and we plead the finished work, we plead the blood of the risen Lord Jesus, the one who is the final sacrifice, who took on himself the full wrath of all the sins of all his people who became that propitiation for us so that we may know, we who call ourselves his, we who call him our saviour and our lord, our king, our elder brother and our friend, that we can know for certain that we stand before you today cleansed and perfected in his finished work, made righteous righteous by his perfect righteousness, standing in his strength, not in our own.

It's with that reality behind us we come just now and we come to this time of worship. We give you praise Lord for this gathering, we thank you we can gather as brothers and sisters but also as friends, we pray just now especially for our friends here today, for those who come here week after week or those or even who come with the boys and girls who as of yet cannot say that they know nor love Jesus but who are interested, who have questions, perhaps have many questions.

Lord we thank you for their presence here today. Lord we ask that not only would they know our love and our joy that they are here but before they leave this place they would encounter perhaps the first time your care for them, your love for them.

They would hear the gospel, the gospel of hope and the glorious gospel of grace which promises to all who wonder at home, who promises to all who are deep and lost in sin forgiveness and rescue from that sin, who promises to all who find themselves in darkness through eternal light.

We ask that to be a reality for our friends here today. We ask also for ourselves as brothers and sisters to help us to be encouraged by your word, to be built up in the word.

[ 10 : 02 ] Help us to come to the word with hearts willing to be transformed and changed and moulded with minds and ears ready to listen and to absorb what it is you are saying to us.

We come not just to an old textbook. We come not just to words in a page. We come not to an old book with much wisdom. We come to your living word, a living true word which at this very moment has the eternal ability because it comes from you to decipher, to take to the very core of what and who we are, to show us ourselves in ways we can't begin to understand, to show us our need of a saviour, to show us the many promises you give to your people, to encourage us, to give us hope, to give us purpose.

As we pray for ourselves in all our mission here today, we also pray once more for our brothers and sisters, indeed our friends next door. We pray for them in our time of vacancy.

As the word is opened with them today, Lord, we ask that you would encourage your people, you would challenge through your word those who are not yet yours. Lord, and you would bring to a saving knowledge of yourself those who are looking for that salvation.

As you remember these two congregations, Lord, as we remember these gatherings of your people, we confess we're not what we should be. We confess that our very division between two buildings shows that as time has gone on we have sinned and gone astray.

[ 11 : 40 ] We know that division is a sign of displeasure very often, but there are very few occasions where division is justified, Lord. We know that you are a God who demands unity of your people.

Lord, forgive us for our disunity. We pray for our own congregation, our own family gathering here. You would keep us united together as the weeks and months and if you will it, Lord, the years ahead go on year after year.

Keep us united, united of one purpose, that we're here to be ambassadors, to be salt and light. We're here to share the glorious life-giving gospel to our neighbours, our family, our friends, to those we see and live alongside day by day.

We ask, Lord, you would do your work in this place. Help us to be salt and light. We pray we would see your kingdom growing in this district.

We'd see hearts and minds come to love and come to serve you. We would see those who once had no knowledge of you come to a full understanding of who you are, what it is to serve you, to know you, to love you, to be guided by the one true living God.

[ 12 : 51 ] We thank you once more, Lord, for the boys and the girls. We thank you that you've enabled Sunday school to begin once more. We pray, Lord, that as they begin this new session that they would grow in their own understanding of who you are.

Help us not to be guilty of despising their youth, but help us to understand that you are able to save even the youngest here, as you are the oldest here.

That age is no barrier to you. Nor history, nor future, nor actions, nor thoughts, nor words, but you alone can save all and any whom you choose to.

In your sovereign power, you can bring to yourself to salvation so many varieties of people. Those in our community we would never think to share the gospel with to our own shame, you can use and bring into your kingdom for glorious work.

Help us to be salt and light. As we read in your word, help us to not hide our light. Help us to show that gospel light to the world around us, to the dying world, to the dark world, to the world that is needing that reality of the gospel.

[ 13 : 59 ] A world that is searching for hope and is finding none. For peace and is finding only warfare. A world searching for answers and finding only more questions after question.

we know that only in Christ do we find peace and rest and answers to the many questions we have of this life. Pray for those who are suffering in our community today.

Those suffering mentally, physically, those suffering of addiction, those suffering of various situations, personal and in our own families. Lord, you alone know the details.

We ask you would free, Lord, them from these illnesses. free them, if it's your will, from these situations. And if not, Lord, in the midst of their illness, in the midst of their situation, you would bring them to a saving knowledge of yourself.

For as they go through the hard days of life, the hard weeks and months and years of life, they would know what it is to go through it with you before them and beside them with the comfort of knowing Jesus as their friend, as their saviour and as their king.

[ 15 : 07 ] help us, we seek to be witnesses, to be salt and light in this place and in this district. Help us to be faithful in our service towards you. We confess that often we find ourselves sluggish, often we find ourselves slow to serve.

Lord, rescue us from that we ask. We come just now thankful for the privilege we have and the freedom we have of sharing the gospel, of hearing it read and sung together. We ask today, Lord, that you would keep in our minds our brothers and sisters across this world who are persecuted for the same gospel that we share freely.

Lord, rescue them, we ask, and for those who are in prison and for those who find themselves not sure what the future holds for them, we ask you give them strength as they serve you even behind prison cells.

Pray for all those who work with our persecuted brothers and sisters. Encourage them, we ask. Be with them, we ask. Help us this short time together to have our ears ready to hear the word as it's read and as it's preached and as you apply it to our hearts.

We ask all these things confessing sin to do, confessing shortcoming, confessing sin before you, willing and unwilling, known and unknown, and relying only on the finished work of our Saviour.

[ 16 : 29 ] It's in his name and for his sake alone we ask all these things. Amen. Before we turn back to God's word we can sing once more this time again from the Scottish Psalter this time from Psalm 2.

Scottish Psalter Psalm 2. Scottish Psalter and Psalm 2. You note our singings today are about God's kingdom as we carry on that theme of the kingdom of God.

it's on page 200. We're actually singing from page 201. Psalm 2 verses 6 down to verse 12.

Yet notwithstanding I have him to be my king appointed and over Zion my holy hill I have him king anointed. Psalm 2 verses 6 to 12 to God's praise Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 18 : 24 ] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[ 21 : 20 ] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Down to verse 32 today, just these few short verses.

We're finishing off what we started last week, looking at the kingdom of God in two parables. Our text, of course, is just these two verses.

I won't spend time summarising last week's sermon, but we saw clearly from God's word that as we seek to see God's kingdom grow in Tolstoy, in our own hearts, in our own homes, that hard work is required.

It is painful work, it is slow work, as we pray and share the gospel, and pray and share the gospel as we try and live Christ-like lives. But at the same time, we also saw last week, that yes, we must strive and serve God well, but at the same time remembering it's not our work.

He builds his kingdom. He grows his kingdom in his way, in his time. And there we have just the beauty of how God works things out.

[ 22 : 38 ] He doesn't need us, but he chooses to make use of us. He uses us as the means of expanding and growing his kingdom.

And we've said that that encourages us, but also it gives us hope and gives us confidence. That God's kingdom expanding in Tolstoy does not rely on us.

It does not rely on your minister, on your elders, on the members here, or the Christians here. At the same time, it does not absolve us from our responsibility.

We're called to serve and to serve him faithfully. God then uses our small service for his glory. And that's what we see today as we come to the second parable.

This parable of the mustard seed, as we said to the boys and the girls. Well, it's really hard to find a mustard seed, so the chia seeds had to make do for this morning's talk.

[ 23 : 38 ] We can look at this parable under two very simple headings. Again, we're talking about the kingdom of God. We said last week, these two parables, from verse 26 to verse 32, we take them really as one.

They're two parables, two separate parables, but they're one teaching we take. It's the same point being made in two different ways. So last week we saw how God grows the kingdom.

And today the question is, what does kingdom growth actually look like? What does God's kingdom growing look like in our lives, in our homes, in our district?

Two very general headings. First of all, it is an unassuming kingdom. It's an unassuming kingdom. And then secondly, it is an unending kingdom.

So unassuming and unending. Brothers and sisters, if we're honest, we often fall into the same temptation that the disciples quite often did.

[ 24 : 44 ] We assume, like the disciples, because we're human like them, that God's kingdom is large. It is something glorious. It's something triumphant.

We see that, don't we? The disciples quite often are surprised when Jesus says something, when he does something, that doesn't show the kingdom to be large or glorious.

Or at least humanly speaking, large and glorious. The disciples, and we'll see this is a whole different study for us, the disciples are expecting a king to come to destroy the Roman Empire, to place Israel back on top, to then expand his kingdom by military strength.

That's what they were taught. That's what they were hearing taught in the synagogues. That was the general understanding of the day. And Jesus then comes and he doesn't do that.

There's no great military arriving with Jesus. Jesus, he's a poor man from a poor family, a simple craftsman from a tiny wee village that no one's heard of.

[ 25 : 53 ] And yet the kingdom of God is growing. We see the disciples and we ourselves with them. We often think of ourselves, to be fair and to be honest, as the centre of God's kingdom.

Without us, his kingdom wouldn't grow as it should. Think of the interaction in Matthew 18. Matthew 18 where we read, At that time, disciples came to Jesus and asked him, Who then is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

What a question. What an arrogant question. We wouldn't be that arrogant, will we? Of course we would. Who then is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? Jesus, he then called a little child to him and placed the child among them and said, Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

The kingdom of heaven belongs to the small, the meek, those with little strength, little power, little understanding. If we think ourselves as a glorious part of the kingdom, then we're not actually going to build the kingdom ever.

We are part of God's kingdom. He uses the small, he uses the weak. And that's the illustration we see given here in this parable. The disciples and us with them, we assume the kingdom of God will be some great, grand occurrence.

[ 27 : 23 ] And friends, those here, you can't yet call yourselves Christians. You can't yet say that you love Jesus. Perhaps you're waiting for this in your life.

I think of my own close family members who aren't Christians. And they say the same thing. They're waiting for something grand to happen. They're waiting on the drive home from town one day, at the Tulsa corner for God to appear before them in thunder and lightning and say, come follow me.

God does do grand things. Yes, he does. And more often than not, God uses the simple and the small. If you wait for a voice from heaven to come speak to you, the chances are you'll be waiting until your dying days for it.

The small and the simple. Your simple and small-minded minister. Your simple understanding of your friends and family. The simple act of preaching, of sharing God's word as best we can.

That's what God uses. And you say, well, I want to hear God's voice. You're hearing it right now, not from me, but from his word. As we did it together, God is speaking to you.

[ 28 : 36 ] God uses the small. As we say with respect, God has nothing to prove. God is not trying to prove himself to be a strong God.

He has no need to prove it to anyone. He uses small people, doing small things and small ways to bring about his glorious kingdom.

Here we find the mustard seed. With what can we compare the kingdom of God? Our saviour asks. What parable shall we use for it?

It's like a grain of mustard seed, which when sown in the ground is the smallest of all the seeds on earth. This is one of the prime examples.

As we keep saying, and we'll keep saying it, as we come to the parables, it is not about the small details. It's about the wider teaching. Jesus is speaking to crofters and fishermen. He is speaking to normal men and normal women.

[ 29 : 37 ] He is addressing normal crowds of normal people. And we come to God's word and we often tear it to shreds and we take it to minuscule parts.

When it comes to the parables, we keep saying it. J.C. Ryle reminds us every time he talks about parables. Parables have one or two, sometimes three central meanings.

And the rest of the information is there to build up the account, build up the story that Jesus is using to convey these meanings. And we see that so often when we come to the mustard seed.

Atheists, those who look for reasons against the gospel, and indeed our friends who will say that God's word is not correct, will point to this parable as one of their main arguments.

They will say, quite rightly, the mustard seed is not the smallest seed. Jesus says it's the smallest seed. They're smaller seeds. In fact, the chia seeds the kids had today are actually smaller, most of them, than mustard seeds.

[ 30 : 42 ] That proves the Bible is rubbish. It proves Jesus didn't know what he was talking about. It proves we wasted our lives. We must have to go home just now and have a lunch earlier. If we step back for a second and ask the question, is Jesus giving a biology lesson here?

Is he giving a lesson on plants? Is he giving a lesson about creation? Or is he talking to farmers and crafters who for them in the land, in the day, what was the smallest seed they planted?

It was the mustard seed. The smallest seed they worked with, the mustard seed. Jesus is using simple terms to explain massive concepts to those who work for ground, normal men and normal women.

Very often, and we'll see this throughout the years, God willing, all the objections we find in Scripture can be solved by reading the actual passage, or by stepping back and asking the logical question, what was the original context of what's being said?

Jesus is talking to normal people who planted mustard seeds, and they understood what he's talking about. A tiny seed, a small seed, the smallest seed they would handle year to year, they plant it.

[ 32 : 01 ] And they plant this small seed, and from this unassuming tiny seed, we see spreading wide something glorious, something useful.

Again, as we said, mustard seeds are often one to two millimeters in diameter, or long, we could say, depending on how you look at it.

Tiny wee seeds, absolutely tiny, like the head of a pin. And they look like nothing. And if you plant them, you plant hundreds, if not thousands of them, you think, this won't grow, this won't do anything.

But it does. As you plant this small mustard seed, and, Christian, as you, in your weak faith, in your small faith, as you share the gospel, as you pray for someone just now who's heavy in your mind, you think, that person who I'd love to come and see them come to faith, that love that I've been praying for for years, is my small prayer worth it?

Is my small effort worth it? Is my jumbled up attempt to share the gospel, is it even worth doing? Because I make such a mess of things.

[ 33 : 17 ] I get my words so mixed up. I'm such a bad example of a Christian. I haven't enough knowledge, enough Bible knowledge, enough theological knowledge, whatever excuses we all grasp onto, me and yourselves together.

as you share your small faith, as small as a mustard seed, as the kingdom of God goes out in word, day after day, you think, what good is it?

Can anything good come out of Nazareth? We saw that question before. Can anything good come out of a small village that no one cares about, of about ten crofters, and a few farmers, and a few animal herders?

A backwater, uncared for village somewhere over there. Can anything good come out of Nazareth? Can anything good come out of Tulsa? Can anything good come out of me?

You might ask yourself. I love Jesus, yes. I follow him. I try to follow him, yes. But I fail him time and time again. I'm such a bad example time and time again.

[ 34 : 29 ] Is there any use whatsoever? Can God use my small understanding? Perhaps you find yourself reading the Bible and you love it, but you understand so little of it.

Perhaps you say, can God use my small faith? You love Jesus, you know Jesus, but you just feel like you fail him so often. Can God use a small amount of service I can offer?

You wish you had more time in the day, more time in the week to serve God better. Brothers and sisters, your, to use bad grammar here, your smallness, your smallness of knowledge, of faith, that small grain of knowledge, of faith, of understanding, of ability, that small mustard seed.

It can be used by the Lord to plant and to grow his kingdom. It's not the grand or the proud or the wise that God uses, is it?

More often than not, it's the humble, it's the small, it's the terrified. We'll see that this evening, of course, of Gideon. It's the useless, small, terrified people who would rather be doing something else that God uses to accomplish his purposes.

[ 36 : 03 ] It's the small mustard seeds of faith. This unassuming seed goes in the ground. You're unassuming small faith, you're unassuming small ability or small biblical knowledge to your Christian, to your friend, to your brother, to your sister.

You love the Lord and you worry so much about your lack of service or you worry so much about your lack of understanding. You take that small seed and you give it over to the Lord and say, I know I don't have much to offer, but I have, I give it over to you to use.

The unassuming kingdom then becomes, we see, an unending kingdom. In verse 32, just briefly, see, the mustard seed, it goes in small, but it does not remain small for very long.

It's actually fascinating. In different climates, mustard seeds can take ages to grow. In other climates, they can grow much faster. So in one part, even of Israel itself, even today, in one part of Israel, mustard seeds grow with a rate, a complete rate of knots.



They just shoot up other parts of Israel, even today, with all the modern agricultural methods we have, they still take time. Same product in the end.

[ 37 : 22 ] You get mustard seeds, you get mustard at the end of the day. Either way, this small seed is planted in the kingdom of God. It's planted in small ways by small people, but it's directed and it's kept and it's given life, of course, by a God that's not small.

And our great God takes our small efforts, our small lives, our small faiths, and he brings his glory out of it. Your small prayers, as it were, they don't remain small.

Your small prayers, dear Christian, as they ascend to glory, we could say, for lack of that of a word, they are heard by a great God. Your small prayers do not remain small.

Your small sharing of the gospel to those who you think aren't even bothered, as you attempt to strive and share the good news to those who listen to you, as you get your words mixed up and say the wrong thing perhaps in a wrong way, but as you strive to share the gospel, God uses these small strivings you are attempting to do to not remain small.

Brothers and sisters, don't think for a second that to be a minister, to preach, it means you have any confidence in your own abilities. Indeed, I think any minister who does, and this is not my thinking, but any minister who does often is humbled by the Lord quite quickly.

[ 38 : 51 ] From minister to elder, to the youngest member here, to the newest Christian here, our faith is small, our efforts are small, our abilities are so small that God takes that.

And there's a glorious certainty here, isn't there, in the wording here of our verse, verse 32. Yet when it's sown, it grows up. There's no doubt here.

When God sows his seed, it does grow up. God's kingdom will grow as he wishes it and wills it and plans it to grow. But he is, of course, the ultimate gardener.

He will grow it in a way that will glorify him the most, as we said to the boys and girls, that small mustard seed, a millimetre or two, the very most grows to be about ten foot high on average.

And it spreads out as branches. It's almost like, it's technically a bush, but it's almost like a tree in its structure. It has branches, thick branches that spread out and it's very, very bushy, what is a bush?

[ 40 : 02 ] It's very, there's much foliage on it. And from that foliage then, animals, as Christ himself says, the birds of the air come and make their nests in its shade. The kingdom of God, it's unassuming.

You wouldn't think much. It's not offensive, is it, for us to say that if someone walked in here just now and saw us, they thought, well, they perhaps don't look like much.

A small gathering of 40 odd people, perhaps, 50 on a good day. What power do they have? What ability do they have? Do any use whatsoever for the kingdom of God in a community of 400 odd?

But because the gospel growth, because the growth of the kingdom is guided by God and not by us, it will grow exactly as he plans it to.

Again, as we said, note that the seed becomes branches, becomes this giant bush 10 feet tall, which provides a welcoming atmosphere.

[ 41 : 10 ] The kingdom of God is for those who will come in and make their home in it. Brothers and sisters, we can't see what God is doing here today. As we saw last week, we don't see the seed growing.

We don't see, we don't know, we have no perception at times at all of what God is doing in our lives, in our family situations, in our community situation.

As you keep praying for that loved one to come to faith, as you keep praying for your children, your parents, your siblings, your close family, your wider family, your neighbours, this community, as we keep praying for this community to come to faith, to come and know Jesus for themselves, as we are seeing perhaps, day by day, nothing happening.

Nothing happening. We think, well, what's the point? As we saw last week with the man doing the sowing, night and day, night and day, he does the work, he sees nothing for it, for what seems like him I'm sure for an age, but yet at the end of the day, we have to trust that the Lord is doing his work.

And perhaps many of us here won't see the result of our work in our lifetimes. I mentioned last week my own granny, she didn't see much of the fruit of her praying, being personal.

[ 42 : 30 ] She never saw me join or become ordained or inducted, but that was prayed for for many years. She didn't see other family members become Christians, but that was prayed for for many years.

And there's many people before us who have prayed for us and friends, those who are, as yet, are not Christians. I can assure you that there are many here and many have come before those here who have been praying for you for many, many years, that you would come and know Jesus and love him for yourself.

We can't see the growth at times. We trust that God is building his kingdom and he's doing it in Tulsa. And how do we know that? Because we are here, our friends, our brothers and sisters next door are still here.

He still has a gospel witness in this place. As long as we still have a gospel witness here, God is building his kingdom here. As long as the word keeps going out week after week here, God is building his kingdom.

As long as God has some of his people living in this district, in this village, God is building his kingdom here. That's our hope. That's our promise.

[ 43 : 39 ] And we trust and we pray the day is coming we will see the fruit of all the hard labour, all the striving in his time and in his way.

In the meantime, in light of this week and last week of these two parables, what's our takeaway lesson as we come to think of the kingdom of God?

Not to be impatient, first of all. So last week, the sower, the farmer, he goes out night and day, he does his job with little result, with no result, until there is result.

We must not be impatient. We must trust God to do his work in his way, in his time. Also, we must not assume. We don't share the gospel with some people, not others.

The gospel goes out to all who will listen. All who will listen. And we must sow. We must do this way of a hard work.

[ 44 : 46 ] Brothers and sisters, we must be engaged in constant prayer for our village, our community. Constant prayer for our loved ones who as of yet don't know Jesus. We know that. I hope we are. I'm sure we are ready.

But just to encourage us once more, we must be in prayer for that. We must also tend. God alone gives the growth, but we must tend to the soil.

Make sure we are giving out the gospel water as often as we can. Being constant prayer. Being constant service. My final encouragement.

We plant. We water. But who gives you increase? Who gives you actual life to anything that we seek to do? It's not us.

It's not preaching. It's not even praying. It's not our effort. It's not our ability. It is God, God alone who gives the increase. He uses his preaching.

[ 45 : 44 ] He uses the prayers of his people. He uses these means to his glory. But he alone gives the increase. And that gives us hope, doesn't it? As we pray for our own families, pray for our friends, our neighbours, as we pray for this district, never mind our island, never mind our nation.

But it's focusing on ourselves. That's a big enough mission field for today. Well, it's 300, 400 odd people, give or take. That's a big enough mission field. So we pray for our community.

Remember, from these two parables, there's work to be done, there's hard work to be done, but God alone builds his kingdom. God alone gives the increase.

friends, just as we come to a close, the last two weeks have been mostly aimed at the Christians here, mostly aimed at the brothers and sisters here, as we talk about what God is calling us to do.

But the truth is, you being here today, you're here perhaps because of your pattern, you're here perhaps because of what you've always done, you're here perhaps to support the Sunday School, and we thank you for that genuinely.

[ 47 : 01 ] But also, whatever reason you're here today in your weekly plan, the truth is, you're here today to hear the gospel. And God has taken you here today to hear once more the gospel.

As we talk about the kingdom of God, it is a kingdom that needs not to be a foreign nation to you. Right now, you're outside of the kingdom of God. Right now, you're outside and you're looking in and you're here sitting amongst us, yes, but you're not in the kingdom.

And the question is, how do you become a citizen, as it were, of the kingdom of God? There's a great payment to be paid. The payment of becoming part of God's kingdom is perfection.

Sorry to say, it's perfection. You must be perfect. You must be totally holy because God can't behold any unperfection, any unholiness.

You must be sinless. That's the admission to God's kingdom. As you think of the Christians here today, you think, well, how did they get in?

[ 48 : 09 ] How did these people get in? They're not holy. They're not sinless. We're not blameless. The price to God's kingdom is a steep price. The glorious thing, and you know what I'm going to say of this, but you've heard it before, but hear it again just one more time.

You must be holy. We can never be holy. You must be perfect. We can never be perfect. You must be blameless, dear friends, and brothers and sisters. You'll never be blameless.

We gain admission to God's kingdom through the finished work of one who is holy, who is perfect, who became like us in all ways apart from sin, who lived a life of perfect obedience, who now covers his people as we're in the clothing of his perfect righteousness.

And because we trust in him, because we trust in Jesus, we are certain that we have access, open and free and eternal access to God's kingdom.

the entry fee is massive. The entry fee is impossible. But the entry fee to God's kingdom has been paid for you if you come today by Jesus.

[ 49 : 25 ] The work's been done. And you not coming into the kingdom of God is down at this moment as you hear the gospel, your own rebellion, your own unwillingness to come, and you have reasons, I'm sure you have good reasons and good excuses, but lay them aside and come and join the kingdom, the glorious kingdom.

Access has been paid for you. The access will never be revoked. Your passport will never be voided, never cut up. You have access and constant access to God's glorious kingdom and we'll have it for all eternity.

Come and join. Not join our church, that we'd love that too, but come and join God's kingdom. That's the most important thing. Just as we come up to communion time, there are many Christians who never become members of a church.

Now, we're told and God's word is clear, if we are Christians, we should publicly profess and become members. That's a discussion for a different day. But there are many Christians and they sit their whole lives in pews and they never become members.

They're still part of God's kingdom. They're still loved by God and kept by God and we may address them as brother and sister even though we have no public declaration of that.

[ 50 : 38 ] There are some, I'm sure, here and some, definitely, in most of the congregations in our island. Before you worry about that, come first and join the kingdom.

We'll talk about membership later on. Talk about that privately if you want. The implications and the meaning and the importance of that. But first and foremost, come and join God's kingdom. God's kingdom will outlast this congregation, outlast this ministry, outlast all of creation.

A kingdom which lasts into all eternity. Come and join it. Come and follow Christ. Come and give your life over to the one who has died already for you so that you can be free and know peace and know his salvation.

Come and join the kingdom of God. Let's bow our heads in a word of prayer. Lord, we thank you once more for the gift of your word as we come before it, Lord, this day.

To have a reminder that your kingdom is a glorious kingdom, an unending kingdom which stretches out to all eternity, which takes in all cultures and nations and skin colours and languages, Lord, that one day we'll be united together, never to be apart and ever again with no more sin, no more corruption, no more pain and no more tears.

[ 51 : 56 ] But a life spent worshipping, an endless life, an endless eternity spent worshipping in the presence of our Saviour. Until that day comes, help us to serve you well in this place as we see your kingdom growing in this village and in this district.

Lord, help us to be faithful witnesses, to be faithful servants, to faithfully proclaim the good news day by day and week by week. Help us to leave this place and spend the rest of this afternoon in constant service, Lord, to you, giving you praise that we come just now to a God who calls his people his own.

We can know that we come just now as your people, that you have set your love, your endless eternal love on us and we can know that and know it for sure because of the finished work of our Saviour.

It's in his name and for his sake we come and we gather, Lord. We thank you for the praise we are able to give. We thank you as always for the one who leads the praise, who leads that essential element of your public worship, the sung praise of your word.

We ask all these things in and for Christ's precious name's sake. Amen. Let's bring our time to a conclusion. we can sing in Sing Psalms.

[ 53 : 08 ] Sing Psalms and Psalm 45a. Sing Psalms Psalm 45a. 45a.

And that is on page 56. Sing Psalms Psalm 45a on page 56.

Of course, this is singing about Christ. A noble theme inspires my heart with verses for the King.

My tongue's a skilful writer's pen composing lines to sing and hears what Christ is described. You far excel the best of men. Your lips are full of grace for God has blessed you evermore.

His light shines on your face. Psalm 45a verses 1 to 6 to God's praise. God has blessed the King.

[ 54 : 07 ] Inspired thy heart And made thought of the King.

Thy tongues have skill For I have set Compostor■■■ Record sing Give Father Come If  
Your lips Are full For God has blessed you evermore, His light shines on your face.

O mighty, mighty, mighty, mighty, Your heart and mighty, On earth high, Where for us  
men never told yourself, My will you majesty?

Right for thanks to the light, For me, as to the light, Let your right come, His Savior, And  
your peace of the heaven of night, And your child, The Lord, The Lord, The Lord, The  
Lord, The Lord, To me, The Lord, The Lord, And all the nations of the air, einen haben  
haupts

Och Kulturas Überantes Und vais You will give us and ever we are all through our glory  
The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of  
the Holy Spirit both you now and forevermore. Amen.