

Title: We are new creations
Mark 4:26

Our Gospel lesson for today is from the Gospel of Mark. It speaks about “the Kingdom of God”, or more specifically about the growth of the kingdom of God. Have you ever looked out at this world and wondered,
 “Why doesn’t the church try to make a bigger impact on this world?
 Why doesn’t God make a big splashy entrance?”

Could you imagine if God would come down and part the Red Sea again? Could you imagine if God were to come down and heal all diseases. Imagine the kind of impact the church could have. If it had that kind of impact, imagine how the church would grow. Who would NOT believe in God? Who would NOT put their faith in Christ. So, we might ask ourselves, “Why doesn’t God just come down and do a great miracle?” Imagine the growth that would bring. Imagine people flocking to the churches of God, begging for another taste of the Word of God, seeing the power of God in their lives. Why doesn’t God just come down and do a great miracle?

The answer to that question is “God has already done something.” “God has already done something which had a great impact on the world... Not only that but God will again do something which will have great impact on this world. God does have a great impact on this world, but not necessarily in the way “the world” measures greatness. His impact does not appear great (as the world measures greatness). His impact does not appear great because His power is hidden from the world. The world is blind to it. To the world, it is a mystery.

Yet even if the world be blind to it, the ways of God are great still. From our Gospel lesson in Mark, Jesus says: "This is what the kingdom of God is like. When you hear Jesus say stuff like: “You have heard it said...” or “The kingdom of God is like...” sometimes you need to know that there is a line missing. When Jesus says stuff like that, He is saying it in response to thoughts the people who are listening to him. Whenever he teaches about the kingdom of God, it is usually in contrast to “the kingdom of this world”. So, you might imagine, the words from Mark as Jesus saying.... “The kingdom of the world teaches that greatness is this... (you have heard it taught that greatness is this...) but the Kingdom of God is just the opposite... This is what greatness in the kingdom of God is like... So, this parable is here, not only to teach us about the kingdom of God, but also how it is different from the ways of this world. This is the lesson which the parable

wishes to convey. Its purpose is to bring sight to the blind, to bring truth to those blinded by a worldly view.

So, what is the lesson of the parable? According to ways of this world.... power is everything... It is power which makes an impact. The more power you have... the more impact you have. The splashier the beginning... the greater the power. But Jesus wants to share a different view... a view from God's eyes. So, Jesus starts with the story of a farmer... Mark chapter 4.

A man scatters seed on the ground. ²⁷ Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. ²⁸ All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. ²⁹ As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.”

You know, I could imagine that, for a farmer, the growth of seeds has become common place. The farmer plants seeds into the ground, and a few months later he returns and then he harvests a crop. This is his job. Do the right work. Till the right soil... Plant the right seed... Get the proper rain.... You get a harvest. It is all relatively straightforward. Because it is so straightforward it is tempting to think that the work of growing things is due to the work of the farmer. There is nothing spectacular about it. However, it is because of the relative commonness of farming that it is easy to miss that a miracle is taking place. First of all, it's easy to miss the power in the seeds. You see, seeds are little tiny things. They don't seem like much. A person can carry a hundred of them in the palm of his hand. Yet from a handful of small seeds can come enough food to feed a family, an entire town. Contained within a handful of tiny seeds was the ability to accomplish a great things. Within the “small” and insignificant may be great power.

But that is not the only miracle. Today even though we can explain the chemical reactions that are involved in the germination process, even though we can explain the chemical reactions which powers the biological processes, even though we have even mapped the very DNA which codes the living processes, the nature of a seed still eludes us. We cannot explain what drives the living processes.... what drives the myriad of interactions.... that must consistently occur in order for the seed to simply sprout and grow. Though the farmer is needed to plant the seed, the seed, itself, contains the force of life. The truth is that the farmer doesn't really make it grow. When the seed is planted, that force is released. that force accomplishes its purpose, and the seed becomes a plant, and the plant bears fruit, almost independent of anything the farmer does. That force of life is the power of God. There is the miracle. Even within the commonplace event like planting

seeds, the miracle of God's hand is evident.... "obvious" to those with the eyes of faith to see. "hidden" from those of the world. This is how the power of God works in this world. This is how the power of God has impact. Jesus says The kingdom of God is like this.... The work of God is like this.... It starts with the small... It starts with the commonplace.... But within His work... is a miracle.

In fact, the very story of our salvation is a story of a miracle hidden in small beginnings. In the beginning when Jesus was born, he didn't look like much – a tiny baby born to a poor Middle Eastern family. In fact, for twelve years, we hear nothing. Even after he became a man his ministry lasted only for three years, and during the three years he didn't look like much. To be sure, he performed miracles..., here and there..., but most of the time all he did was talk about things that people didn't understand very well "repentance" and "faith" and "the life to come." Even when Jesus died on the cross, he didn't look like much at all. Very unimpressive! He died between two common criminals. His followers weren't much to look at either a group of uneducated fishermen who didn't fit in with the rest of society. In the eyes of the world, they were nothing but insignificant little seeds.

But the prophet Ezekiel tells us that "God is the gardener." It is He, who plants the seeds... At first, they may not look like much just a small young twig Not very impressive. But "wait and see" "Little seeds indeed..." Little seeds... yes.... But a great force lies dormant within them. The power of God lies within them. Wait and see. Oh, wait and see.

And we know the miracle which was hidden in the humble beginnings of Christ. We know the miracle that grew from those seeds. After dying, Christ rises from the dead. His death wasn't just a sad injustice. Rather, it was all part of a master plan designed by God to take away our sins. At his resurrection, death, the great evil was destroyed. No longer would death be the last word on Man. At his ascension, we were promised that one day, WE too would look into heaven, and see a greater miracle the greatest of all miracles. One day we too would see Christ coming again in all his glory, with all the saints and angels behind him, coming to take us home. When it comes to the things of God hidden in the little seeds of His work.... hidden in the humble beginnings... are great miracles! God does things that seem small or humble in the eyes of the world. But the things that God does afterwards, turn out to be, the greatest, most amazing things we could ever imagine.

So, when we look at the world today.... when we think God needs to make a greater impact on this world... we remember that God has already made an impact

on this world. When he sent his Son, Jesus, to die on a cross for the sins of Man he changed the world. Not only that but God will make an even greater impact on this world on the last day, on Judgment day, when He will return and remake the world anew.

So when you speak to people about the impact of God, reveal to them the hidden power. To help them see the miracle, reveal the future. Because of Christ... we look forward to the fulfilment of these promises. Death is gone. No more separation from God. no more separation from loved ones. We will stand face to face with God we know he hears us. No more will we suffer from the injustices of a sinful world These are the promises which we live in. You may think, but these are all in the future... what about today?

This is the answer. There is no way to remove the sufferings of this world. They are the consequences of sin in this world. But how you face them either with despair or hope depends on what you think is coming up, whether you think there is a light at the end of the tunnel or not. God has promised that all we have suffered will be made right. God has promised that all we have suffered will be incomparable to the joy we will have. We have been promised a light at the end of the tunnel. For this reason, we can endure this sinful world with hope, because we know there is a light at the end of the tunnel. The best is yet to come. We live with a divine promise. We live with a divine hope. That is the hidden power within the seed of faith. That hidden power is not to be kept for ourselves alone. God calls us to share that hidden hope with all. To the people of this world who hunger for something to place against their fear of death. To the people of this world, who need a hope to place against the despair which this world feeds them, God is calling us to scatter the seeds of His hope.