

UNSTOPPABLE

Matthew 13:31-33, 44; Mark 4:30-32 / Yeshua §§64, 66

As Pastor Phil expressed in our previous study, the day of rejection was a day of inauguration. It was the inaugural day of the Mystery Kingdom.

Having rejected Jesus as Messiah, that generation of Israel forfeited the Messianic Kingdom. The Messianic Kingdom will be delayed until the end of the seven-year Tribulation. The generation of Israel alive at that time will receive Jesus as their Messiah and, as a result, receive the Messianic Kingdom.

The question then became, "What form will the kingdom of heaven take now that Israel has rejected the Messianic kingdom?" In other words, "What will the kingdom of heaven be like from the day of rejection through the end of the Tribulation?"

In answer, Jesus taught nine parables, each of which revealed something about the New Kingdom program. Jesus referred to these as "the secrets" or "the mysteries" of the kingdom of heaven.

A "mystery" is a truth revealed by a New Testament speaker or author which was not revealed in the Old Testament. It is the revealing of a truth unknown prior to that moment in history. In other words, the New Kingdom was not revealed in the Old Testament. God revealed the Messianic Kingdom to the Hebrew prophets. God did not reveal to them this present form of the Kingdom that exists between the first and second comings of Jesus. That is why it is called the Mystery Form of the Kingdom. The Mystery Form of the Kingdom was not seen in the Old Testament. Jesus is the first prophet to reveal the Mystery Form of the Kingdom.

In our previous lesson we studied the parables of the *Soils*, the *Seed* and the *Wheat and Tares*.

The parable of the *Soils* reveals that the New Kingdom will spread through the preaching of the Word of God.

The parable of the *Seed* reveals that the New Kingdom will grow because the life and power to grow are in the *seed*, the Word of God.

The parable of the *Wheat and Tares* reveals that we cannot discern genuine believers from false, but Jesus can and will sort things out at the Judgment.

The next two parables Jesus taught focused on the growth of the Kingdom. The next two parables are the parables of the *Mustard Seed* and the *Leaven* found in Matthew 13:31-33.

To better appreciate the Mustard Seed and Leaven parables, let's consider the historical situation. Jesus has been rejected by the powerful Jewish religious establishment. He has alienated the scribes and Pharisees and repudiated first-century Judaism. With the cleansing of the Temple Jesus made enemies of the High Priest and the party of the Sadducees. The political power-holders, the Roman-backed Herodians, were aligned with the Pharisees against Jesus.

With Jesus was a handful of fishermen and common laborers with no political or social clout. How can these nobodies possibly prevail against the High Priest, the scribes and Pharisees and the entire Jewish religious establishment? How can they prevail against the Great Sanhedrin? How can they prevail against the kingdom-crushing power of the Roman Empire?

The New Kingdom doesn't seem to have a chance.

The question the parable of the *Mustard Seed* answers is this: "With so little in the way of human and material resources, is it realistic to believe the New Kingdom will even survive?"

Part 1.	The Coming of the King
Part 2.	The Authentication of the King
Part 3.	The Controversy over the King
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Part 4.	The Training of the Twelve by the King
Part 5.	The Opposition to the King:
Part 6.	The Preparation of the Disciples by the King
Part 7.	The Official Presentation of the King
Part 8.	The Preparation for the Death of the King
Part 9.	The Trial of the King:
Part 10.	The Death of the King
Part 11.	The Resurrection and the Ascension of the King
Part 12.	The Sequels

WILL THE NEW KINGDOM EVEN SURVIVE?

MATTHEW 13:31-32 (ESV)

31 He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. 32 It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

Most family gardens in first-century Israel included a mustard bush. A mustard bush was used for food, seasoning and medicine. Though the mustard seed is tiny, the mustard bush that grows from it becomes huge. The mustard bush can grow to the height of ten to twelve feet. From the tiniest of seeds, the mustard plant grows to be the largest plant in the garden.

This will be true of the New Kingdom. Though it has little in the way of human and material resources, it will not just survive; it will become huge and encompass thousands upon thousands of people. Against all odds, and out of all proportion to its tiny beginning, the New Kingdom will become massive.

This answer provoked yet another question. If this New Kingdom is to attain such immense proportions against such odds, how will this growth take place? By what mechanism will the New Kingdom grow?

To answer this question, Jesus moved from the garden to the kitchen.

BY WHAT MECHANISM WILL THE NEW KINGDOM GROW?

MATTHEW 13:33 (ESV)

He told them another parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened."

This was a scene with which everyone in the crowd was familiar. Bread was a staple of their diets. Leaven is another term for yeast. Yeast is worked into the lump of dough to make the bread rise. Sometimes leaven is used symbolically in the Scriptures to picture evil. I don't think that is the way Jesus is using leaven in this parable. Rather, Jesus compares the growth of the New Kingdom to a characteristic of leaven in the bread making process.

Like the tiny size of the mustard seed, a small amount of yeast can leaven a large batch of dough. In this case, Jesus describes a woman leavening 50 to 60 pounds of dough. The yeast is added then the dough is kneading, being pushed down and out several times. The lump was allowed to rest near the warmth of the oven and periodically kneaded until the woman was confident the yeast had permeated the entire lump. Then and only then was it placed in the oven.

It is the nature of leaven to spread and permeate the lump.

So will it be with the Mystery Kingdom; it will spread and permeate the world. The mechanism by which the New Kingdom will grow will be by the permeation of God's Word from one life to the next. It is the very nature of the New Kingdom to spread and permeate because it is a spiritual work. The Kingdom will not grow through military might or politics or religious institutions; it will grow because it is the nature of this Kingdom to spread and permeate.

Truly born-again people who have been made alive to God and indwelt with the Spirit desire other people to experience the new birth. The love of Christ compels us to reach out to others with the good news of Jesus Christ. That desire overcomes obstacles of race, history, gender, politics, social status and education. Like Jesus, we want all people to be saved. It's in our DNA.

Satan and the world have been trying to stop the kingdom for two thousand years. But it always backfires. They can kill us, but our deaths bear witness to the truth of the gospel. They can put us in prison, but we'll preach Christ to our fellow captives.

Tertullian, one of the early Church Fathers, converted to Christianity based in part on his wonder at Christians' faithfulness in the face of persecution and martyrdom. It was Tertullian who wrote, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."

Some of the first blood to be spilt will be that of the disciples. From this day forward they lived with targets on their backs. It will cost them and their families to follow Jesus. On this day of rejection their hopes of a soon coming Messianic Kingdom with the glory of Solomon came crashing down. They had left all in pursuit of this dream and now it was gone. And now Jesus is encouraging them to follow Him into a new and different Kingdom program; one never before revealed in Scripture. How will it compare to the glories of the Messianic Kingdom? Because of what they knew from the Old Testament, they were convinced the Messianic Kingdom was worth the sacrifices and the commitment they had made to Jesus. But could the same be said for this New Kingdom? Will it be worth the sacrifices they were making?

This is the question Jesus answers in the parables of the *Treasure* and the *Pearl* found in Matthew 13:44-45.

WILL LIVING FOR THE NEW KINGDOM BE WORTH IT?

MATTHEW 13:44-46 (ESV)

44 "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, 46 who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Will living for the New Kingdom be worth it?

The answer is yes. In fact, both parables teach the New Kingdom is worth far more than anything this world can give. Both men liquidated all their assets to obtain it. Both parables answer the same question. It may be the man in the first parable is a man like Levi who wasn't looking for the kingdom, but the kingdom "found" him. The second man searching for fine pearls might be a man like Andrew; a devout Jew looking for the coming of the kingdom. The point is, living for the New Kingdom will be well worth it for all who find it.

We have to believe this because elsewhere Jesus tells His disciples:

JOHN 15:18-21 (ESV)

18 "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20 Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. 21 But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me.

Dedicating our lives to the kingdom, as did the Apostles, brings persecution. We have suffered little persecution for our faith, but I believe that's changing. Persecution of Christians in America is going to increase. To remain steadfast, we need to believe what Jesus is teaching in these parables; dedication to the kingdom, even if it comes with persecution, is worth it.

The Apostles must have taken this truth to heart. According to tradition and the Bible, eight of the Apostles died as martyrs. At least two of the Apostles, Peter and Andrew were crucified. Again, according to tradition, James son of Alphaeus was thrown down from the Temple by the scribes and Pharisees; he was then stoned, and his brains beat out with a fuller's club¹. The Apostle John was incarcerated in the prison colony on the Isle of Patmos in his later years. Other than Judas Iscariot, not one Apostle abandoned Jesus or the Kingdom even when persecuted.

If we were to ask Mohammed of Nigeria if dedicating his life for the Kingdom is worth it, he would answer with a resounding "Yes!"

Mohammed, was only a teenager when he was forced to live in a half-constructed apartment building after his family threw him out for going to church.

¹ A was a staff or tool used by dye makers of that day.

As Fulani herdsmen, Mohammed's parents were strict Muslims and kicked him out when he started attending church. He spent the next six years living in a building without plaster, windows or a pillow to sleep on, until he finished school.

"Because I was Fulani, I didn't know how to read or write until the day I started going to church. From there I sent myself to school to learn."

At 18 years of age, extremely unwell with nowhere to go and no money, Mohammed tried to return home but was again rejected, even by his siblings.

"My brothers told me it would be better if I were dead than for them to be associated with an unbeliever," he recalls.

He soon met a Christian man who occasionally helped him with food and money and was a constant source of encouragement for him.

"He would tell me, 'Be strong, this season that you're going through will pass and you will forget it.'"

The man told him about a Bible school, but without money, it would be impossible for him to attend.

Mohammed contacted the Bible school. They confirmed the need to pay tuition fees.

"I prayed and said, 'God if you want me to go to this school, you will provide for me.'"

After that prayer, he received a phone call saying that his fees had been paid for and he began attending the school. He does not know who paid.

Mohammed soon realised he would struggle to gain acceptance even within Christian communities because of his Fulani background.

Even after completing Bible school, time and time again, Mohammed found himself with nowhere to go and no money.

"I wasn't accepted by Christians or Muslims and if it wasn't for the love I have for Jesus, I would never have stayed a Christian."

At age 25, Mohammed only recently arrived at YWAM and knows this is where his new journey begins.

"In all these things I've gone through, I know that God has been training me," he says.

"If I meet people that go through this, I will be able to listen to them, to hold them and be there for them."

Mohammed has recently been in contact with his mother and she has started to speak to him again.

"Since then I prayed that God would not allow my mother to die until she knows Jesus."

Despite the rejection he has lived with, and the emotional battles he is facing, Mohammed is standing strong in his faith.

"Everything you see about me is through Jesus, the gentleness, everything I have. Nothing can separate me from Christ, not even my own family. People have offered me everything – money, cars if I would come back to Islam. I said no, you cannot change me."²

Whether we suffer persecution or not; living for the kingdom is worth it now and for eternity. The Kingdom will overcome and living for the Kingdom will be worth far more than anything this world can give.

² <https://vom.com.au/rejected-by-his-family-but-found-in-christ/>