



A BETTER WORD

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

A Study Through the Life of King Jesus | with Pastor Nick Gatzke

Perspective on the Kingdom

Mark 4:21–34

THE BIG IDEA

God's kingdom will grow in his way, in his time, and to his size. Your job is to put the king on display — and to not give up.

SERMON SUMMARY

Empires rise and fall. Britain once ruled a quarter of the earth, and today the sun sets on it like everything else. So what should we expect of the kingdom of God, announced two thousand years ago and still not visible? Jesus gives three parables to correct our perspective, because things are not as they seem.

A lamp is not lit to sit under a basket. It is set high so the whole room can see. That is how this kingdom grows — not by conquest, wealth, or treaty, but as followers of the king put him on display.

The second parable is about timing. A farmer scatters seed, sleeps and rises, and the seed sprouts — he knows not how. We can sow. We can create conditions. We cannot cause a single heart to be born again.

And the third is about scale: the mustard seed, proverbially the smallest, becomes the largest of the garden plants. What the world calls small and obscure becomes the eternal reign of God. His way, his time, his size.

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Lamps were set high so the light would fill the room. If Jesus is the light and his followers are the ones positioning the lamp (vv. 21–23), how does this elevate evangelism? Why is “pay attention to what you hear” attached to it in verse 24?
2. Three things keep us quiet: not knowing what to say, not functionally believing in hell, and fear for our reputation. Which of these is most true of you? What would need to change for the beauty of the king to outweigh it?
3. In the second parable the farmer “knows not how” the seed grows (v. 27). List what you actually can do in someone’s coming to faith and what you cannot. How does 1 Corinthians 3:6–7 settle the question?
4. If God gives the growth in his timing, what should count as success in ministry? Where have you measured faithfulness by visible results — or felt envy when the harvest came somewhere other than where you were sowing?

5. The mustard seed is the smallest and becomes the largest (vv. 30–32). Where else does God work through what looks insignificant?

LIVING IT OUT

Missionary William Carey sailed for India expecting great things and saw nothing for seven years — a partner who abandoned him, a son buried, a wife who never recovered. “I can plod,” he said. “To this I owe everything.” Then God gave the growth. The days are long and the years are short, and you will not see everything you hope to see. Keep the lamp high anyway. Keep sowing anyway.

Heart Check: What are your real expectations for the kingdom in your lifetime — and have unmet ones made you quietly stop trying? Is there a person you have written off because you already made your best attempt and nothing happened?

This Week: Name one person you stopped praying for and start again this week. Then take one deliberate step to put the king on display for them: move a casual conversation toward a spiritual one, invite them to a meal, or simply tell them what God has done in your life.

REFLECTION & PRAYER

“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.”

— **Mark 4:26–27**

Confess the impatience or discouragement that has slowed your sowing. Then ask God for the endurance to plod — and thank him that the growth was never yours to produce.

Your Prayer:

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