

Mark 4: 26-32

26 He also said, 'The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, ²⁷and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. ²⁸The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. ²⁹But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.'

30 He also said, 'With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? ³¹It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; ³²yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.'

Commentary: Here are two short parables that speak about growth, inner growth. In the first parable the emphasis is on the fact that we cannot make ourselves grow. The seed of the kingdom planted in us by God and Jesus - the visible word of God - grows outside our control. We can, however, perceive its growth by the results: visible signs of an invisible reality. In the second parable the emphasis is on how small and vulnerable the seed is. Yet in time it becomes large, secure and fruitful. These parables are intended to encourage us to trust in the future God is seeking to bring about in us. God will complete what God has begun in us. We must trust God's plan even through our darker moments of anxiety and uncertainty.

Are you anxious and uncertain about your present or future? Is this obstructing your trusting openness to God's plan for your life? Are you willing to cast your cares upon the Lord and take a step forward in your spiritual life? Are there particular issues where this teaching is particularly relevant?

In this season of Covid-19, it's hard not to get obsessed by daily news and all the fear and anxiety it can generate. It can also bring us down as we face an unknown future. It's hard not to be focused on daily and weekly survival for ourselves and those close to us, period. Yet, what if this is also a super concentrated time where something hidden in us can sprout up and grow in ways we could never predict or anticipate? The key will be how we absorb reality for what it is rather than fear it. Let's not fear the down times in us. Let's pay attention to it, have compassion for ourselves rather than judgement, accept our fear rather than seek to escape it by drugging ourselves into oblivion... and let's wait for that seed to grow in us trusting a larger goodness/God to work in and through us over this time.

Prayer: Lord God, I want to trust you completely. I want to believe that you have a plan for my life. But I also have my doubts, worries, uncertainties and fears. I have a difficult time letting go certain things and letting you lead me forward. Help me to find the inner peace and assurance to go where I have not gone before in my relationship with you, especially at this time. Bring me to a new level of faith in your transforming possibilities and purposes for my life, especially at this time. I ask this prepared to wait upon you and listen for when you do speak... Amen.