

## Reflection for June 30, 2024 – God’s Mustard Seeds Inspired by Mark 4:26-34

If you at times feel tiny and insignificant, if you feel at a loss to comprehend your value, then this parable is for you.

Tiny and seemingly insignificant is what a mustard seed is. And yet one individual seed, about the size of a pin head, can grow to 20 feet high and 15 feet wide. One tree can produce 10,000 seeds.

A tiny speck of a thing, 1-2 mm in diameter, planted and if allowed to germinate and grow, demonstrates the incredible, and at times incomprehensible nature of Creation. It is all really quite remarkable.

Jesus used a lot of parables like today’s to make his point. The incredible thing about a parable is that its meaning is timeless. A parable can speak to us today just as well as it did when Jesus first spoke the words. This one certainly does.

The Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed Jesus said to the crowd. It is the smallest of seeds on earth but look what happens when it is allowed to germinate and blossom. Excuse me, folks wondered, I’m a mustard seed? Say again Jesus?

The interpretation he would hope people would make was, “you are all a part of God’s kingdom reality.” “You, ordinary people, farmers, labourers, artisans, builders, street vendors, merchants, you can be part of the glorious revolution. A time will come when equality will prevail. There will be harmony among all peoples. A more peaceful and just society will be birthed. And you, all of you who are unbelievers now, can be part of that. Just look at what a mustard seed can do. You are like that seed, the potential for miracles lies within you. Believe it. Look at the mature mustard tree and believe.”

We approach the eve of Canada Day. Tomorrow we will celebrate the 157<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our confederation. It is not a special anniversary, but one that is drawing in my attention more than usual. I expect that is because we seem to be living inside a cyclone just now. The world seems to be spinning out of control. Serious military conflicts are abundant, the poor and desperate are no better off, the incredible creation that we are a part of is cracking beneath our feet, and in those places where it matters most, we are vastly short of capable and honest political leaders. As Nibs Stroupe says, “We live in an age when the mystery and surprise of all life, including God’s power, are being squeezed out of our consciousness.”<sup>1</sup>

I think it is because of all the turmoil that surrounds us that I am drawn more closely to reflecting on my roots. I was born in Canada to parents that immigrated after the war. A stable and loving family, always a roof over my head, free education and health care, career opportunities for my choosing. And where in the world can someone at age 59 retire, go back to school and take on an entirely new career like I did? I, and we, all are so grateful to be here.

This of course does not mean to imply that Canadians don’t have significant challenges because we do. Which brings me back to that little nondescript, seemingly

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<sup>1</sup> P. 143

very ordinary mustard seed. The promise of great things exists in each and every seed, and likewise, in each and every one of us gathered here today. You have already proved that.

Your individual seeds sprouted, in many cases quite a while ago! And you blossomed into kind, generous and giving people. Some of you farmed and fed others. Some of you were peacekeepers, health care workers, artisans, businesspeople, labourers and shopkeepers or professionals. Others may have worked at home as domestic engineers and care givers. All of you grew to maturity in different ways, but you all had one thing in common. You have all been people who served God and followed Jesus in some way. You have all been part of the kin-dom's coming. You have all been God's mustard seeds.

Those seeds were sown in fertile soil, and you have put forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in your shade. Those branches have also supported the needy, held up the fallen and sheltered the lost and abandoned.

So, let us not despair when we look around us focusing only on what is negative. Let's gaze instead out from this sanctuary and celebrate all that we have contributed to, all that we have accomplished as a spirit led people, and all that we will continue to do in our ministry. We are grateful for being in such a place as this, and we do make a difference, every single one of us. And more than that, we are thankful to be a part of this incredible COF where miracles do happen. You have blossomed from tiny faith seedlings to mature, strong and committed disciples.

It is good to be here. Happy Canada Day and thanks for listening this morning,  
Amen