



Short Stories that Speak Volumes for Our Lives

The Measure of a Mustard Seed

Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches" (Matthew 13:31,32).

Who is America's richest man? America's tallest mountain? Largest lake? Largest city? Most populous state? If you answered Elon Musk, Denali (Mount McKinley), Lake Superior, New York City, and California, you are part of the proof that Americans pay attention to big things. We live in bigger houses, eat larger meals, and work longer hours than almost any other people in the world. We tend to live by the maxim, "Bigger is better."

But Jesus takes the "less is more" approach. He says: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed." Have you ever seen a mustard seed? It's so small that you could hold thousands in your hand. Why would Jesus tell us this? Because it's possible to be so focused on what *looks* big and impressive that we overlook him and his blessings.

It's a common mistake. At first glance, there was nothing big or impressive about Jesus. When he came to establish his kingdom, he arrived as a child of a poor girl in a conquered country. He was born in a barn. He grew up in an obscure village. His followers were nobodies. He never wrote a book or held a high position. He never

lived in a palace or even a house of his own. After a few years in the public eye, he was killed on a cross like a common slave. On Good Friday, he *looked* small and powerless.

When Jesus spoke about the mustard seed, he gave us a short story that speaks volumes for our lives. The measure of a mustard seed is not its tiny size but the huge plant that it grows into. In the same way, the measure of Jesus' humble life and death is not how many people missed its meaning at the time but what he accomplished. By his perfect life and his innocent death, Jesus has freed the world from the guilt of sin. Countless millions who have put their trust in him have become part of his eternal kingdom.

When Jesus rose from his humble grave to conquer death on Easter morning, he proved that what seems small and weak can be amazingly powerful. It's Easter time again—why not celebrate by exploring what his life and death and resurrection can mean in your life? You might be surprised!