

## ***Message Summary***

Bearing fruit for the Kingdom of God especially involves Christ's command to spread the gospel of the kingdom of God, whenever and wherever we are (Lk. 13:1-9). This evangelistic commission transitions Christ to just how such kingdom growth occurs when we spread it (vv. 10-21). Jesus does not miss this opportunity because he loves teaching truth, and taught regularly and thoroughly. In doing so, Christ issues an example of teaching through God's Word as the best way for kingdom growth to occur.

Kingdom growth starts small, but over time grows in massive proportions. Jesus illustrates this by starting small himself: with a single disabled woman in the midst of great crowds (vv. 10-17). Jesus' love for the great crowds does not diminish his love for this particular woman, whom He took the initiative to seek out. Jesus heals her of demonic possession, evidenced by physical disability, and she in turn glorified God. The synagogue ruler, however, was indignant, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath. Jesus identifies the rulers' hypocrisy by showing that even they cared for their oxen and donkeys on the Sabbath, yet insisted that this woman wait until the following day to be healed. Thus, they showed themselves more concerned about their animal's welfare than this woman's, an offspring of Abraham! Discipleship, not legalism, yields kingdom growth. Jesus came to call individuals just like this woman to himself, and through discipleship and teaching make us whole.

Kingdom growth is twofold: external and internal. External kingdom growth is the kingdom advancing in the world, which Jesus illustrates through a mustard seed (vv. 18-19). Though the smallest of seeds, given enough time, it grows into a mustard tree, fifteen feet tall! Real growth is not artificially manufactured overnight. Rather, it starts small and grows. Christianity itself started small, with one Man born in a manger who led 3 others, then 12, then 120. This 120 became 500, then 2,000, and then expanded around the world, influencing everything in its path such as healthcare, science, slavery, and childbirth. But kingdom growth also occurs internally: on a personal, individual level, by Christ expanding his rule and reign in our hearts. The Parable of the Leaven (vv. 20-21) illustrates that the kingdom of God, though its start in our lives may be small, grows to influence everything in us: how we learn, talk, relate, raise children, work, and live to the glory of God.

## ***WHY IT MATTERS***

### ***Digging Deeper***

What are ways you have seen God use small things to ultimately yield vast kingdom growth?

Based on the sermon today, what is legalism? How was the synagogue ruler guilty of an unbiblical legalism? (See esp. vv. 14-17; Mk. 7:1-23; Gal. 5:16-26; Col. 2:16-3:17.) What are some modern day examples of legalism? Is it ever a temptation to disregard faithful and Biblical obedience to God in the name of legalism?

The synagogue rulers were prone to elevate animal life over human life. What distinguishes human life from natural life (see esp. Gen. 1:26-31; Jonah 4:9-11; 1 Cor. 15:49; Jm. 3:9)? In what other ways did Jesus show concern and compassion for human life (see esp. Mk. 6:30-44; Lk. 15:20)? How can we foster a greater care for human life (see esp. Rm. 12:9-21; Phil. 2:4-11; Jm. 1:26-27)?

## ***NOW WHAT DO WE DO?***

### ***Group Discussion & Application***

*Use the following questions to examine what the sermon and its text mean, to apply the Word to your life, and to guide how you pray. Please note that you don't have to use all of the questions. These are just options (along with the digging deeper section) to help you frame the family/small group discussion.*

1. Are you a part of the kingdom, with Christ living in you? Is he truly ruling and reigning in your heart?
2. In what ways is God leading you to bring him greater glory, and spread the kingdom?
3. Are you taking the initiative to move towards individual people to spread the seed of kingdom growth in their lives, or do you allow people to be "lost in the crowd"? How can you be more intentional this week to seek out individuals like Jesus did?
4. In what ways are you tempted to overlook small avenues of kingdom growth, external or internal? Why is this a temptation? To what avenues this week can you be more attentive?
5. "There is no better way for the church to grow than the teaching of God's Word." How can you be part of teaching God's Word this week to people around you, whether in formal or informal ways?
6. "Beware of things that grow quickly." In what ways are you tempted to replace true, long-term kingdom growth with artificial substitutes? How can you cultivate more faithfulness in planting true, mustard seed-sized, kingdom seeds and patience to see their growth?

## ***Prayer***

- Pray for Our Church:
  - Pray that the gospel seed would take root within Christ Fellowship, and grow like yeast to influence every area of life: how we learn, talk, relate, raise children, work, and live
  - Pray that our church would not underestimate small avenues for kingdom growth, but trust God to give growth as we faithfully plant mustard seeds
- Pray for Our Community:
  - Pray that the Lord would provide plentiful opportunities this week for Christ Fellowship to spread the kingdom externally in this community, especially to individual people like the woman Jesus healed.
  - Pray that the Lord would bless our Easter service and egg hunt to spread the gospel among children in this community. Pray that He would use this year's Vacation Bible School to spread the kingdom to those who come, and that it would be multiplied many times over for families and backyard Bible clubs all over our community.
- Pray for Our World:
  - Pray that the Lord would continue the significant Christian growth in China, and that the false religions of statism and economic success would be shown foolish in comparison to the vast joy of knowing Christ.
  - Pray that the gospel seed would take root and grow in global areas where Christianity is declining, especially in North America. Pray that Christians would work to take the true gospel to neighbors, even as we send it around the world.