

Second week of January

The Parable of the Mustard Seed and the Kingdom of God

- **Text:** Mark 4:30~32 (January 11)
- **Bottom line:** The parable of the mustard seed growing from a small seed to a big tree shows the expansion of God's kingdom.

≡ 1. Praise

(Hymn 304) The Great Love of God

≡ 2. Prayer

Loving God, our family has gathered before you. Please join us in praise, prayer, and the Word.

≡ 3. The Word

Read Mark 4:30~32 together (read the passage 3 times).

* Reading the Word over and over again in different translations will help you to deepen your understanding of the material.

<English Standard Version>

30 And he said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? 31 It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, 32 yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

< New American Standard Bible>

30 And He said, "How shall we picture the kingdom of God, or by what parable shall we present it? 31 It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the soil, though it is smaller than all the seeds that are upon the soil, 32 yet when it is sown, it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and forms large branches; so that the birds of the sky can nest under its shade."

<Word Explanation>

- * Parable: To explain something in comparison to something similar to something else
- * Mustard seed: The seed of the mustard plant, a figurative term for something very small

Understanding Text

Jesus spoke to the people gathered on the shore of the Sea of Galilee about the kingdom of God in many parables. The mustard seed is a very small seed. However, when planted in the ground, it grows bigger than any other grass and grows into a tree with large branches where birds can rest. Like a mustard seed that shows amazing vitality, the kingdom of God will expand in that way.

☒ Understanding the text for leaders

In chapter 4, Jesus uses a parable to tell the story of the kingdom of God. Among them, the parable of the mustard seed shows the work that Jesus will do in the future and the attributes of the kingdom of God. The mustard seed was considered the smallest of all seeds at the time, and although it may seem small and insignificant, when it is planted in the ground, it sprouts and grows, becoming bigger than any other grass and providing shade for birds to rest. It's the same with the kingdom of God. Even though it may seem small and insignificant now, when the gospel of God's kingdom is preached to people, a person's life will be completely changed. And not only one person's life, but also the people around them are changed, and amazing things happen that change the country, the people, and even the whole of humanity. This was the case with the twelve disciples of Jesus, and it led to the transformation of Zacchaeus, the people who met Jesus, their families, and not only Israel, but also the surrounding countries and the Roman Empire that ruled Israel. Another small, insignificant mustard seed represents Jesus' present state and the suffering and persecution that Jesus will endure in the future. However, the gospel of the kingdom that Jesus preaches and the suffering, death, and resurrection on the cross that Jesus accomplishes are not small or insignificant. At that time, the religious leaders, politicians of the Roman Empire, and Roman soldiers ignored the Lord Jesus, made fun of His words and work, and thought that they could trample on Him and destroy Him with their own strength. But the mystery of the kingdom of God was in Jesus and in His life and ministry. So, wherever Jesus Christ was preached, the kingdom of God expanded. The kingdom of God, which continues to expand, can be clearly seen through the parable of the mustard seed that Jesus spoke today.

4. Sharing

1) Why did Jesus use the parable of the little mustard seed to explain the kingdom of God? (Verses 31~32)

■ Upper grades

How big did Jesus say the little mustard seed grew after it was planted in the ground? (verse 32).

■ Lower grades

How big did the little mustard seed in the ground grow? (verse 32).

☒ Question Guide

Dramatically comparing the appearance of a small and insignificant mustard seed with what it looks like after it has grown in the ground will help your children understand the mysteries of the kingdom of God.

☒ Comments for Leaders

Jesus was always resisted by the religious leaders and the establishment of the Roman Empire. To those who had power and power, Jesus was just a weak and insignificant young man from the countryside. Jesus was helplessly killed by their hands, but in the end, He overcame His death and was resurrected to complete God's work of salvation. The resurrection of Jesus is a good example of the growth of the kingdom of God, just as a small mustard seed becomes a big tree.

2) It's a small thing, but what are some of the things that we as a family will decide to do in faith? Be specific about how you want to get started.

■ **Upper grades**

If the seed of faith has been planted in my heart, how should my words and actions change? Think about it and share it.

■ **Lower grades**

We confess to God, who is pleased to accept our worship, "I believe in God."

☒ Question Guide

You can tell that there is life inside a mustard seed by the way it sprouts and grows after it is planted in the ground. We can also know that we have faith in Jesus when we believe that Jesus is in us and act on it. When we make decisions and act with faith in every moment, we will experience the growth of our faith in our daily lives.

☒ Comments for Leaders

When we acknowledge Jesus in every moment, the life of Jesus Christ planted in us is manifested in our life of faith. This kind of life belongs to the saved saints. Think about what kind of life you will live when you acknowledge and confess Jesus who is with us in all areas of your life, and then put that life into practice.

☰ 5. Gratitude

Think about how many people around you believe in Jesus, and give thanks to be the people of heaven together.

☰ 6. Prayer

God! We praise You for turning a small mustard seed into a big tree. Please increase my small heart and love for you. Please let us not be afraid or sad because of reality, but look forward to the kingdom of God and live confidently.

- End the family worship service with the "Lord's Prayer"

☰ 7. Family Mission

<Growing Seeds> *What to bring: Small seeds, plastic containers, 1 paper towel, water

1. Observe the seeds by touching them with your hands. Feel free to talk about what color it is, what shape it is, and how hard it is when pressed.
2. Let your child know that there is life in a seed that is invisible.
3. Fold a paper towel into a plastic container, place the seeds on top, and pour in water until moist. Check the amount of water from time to time and observe how the seeds change over the course of a week.

Talk about how you felt as you observed the seed and how it sprouted and grew. In the same way, let them know that the seed of faith in Jesus is planted and growing in us. Let's share with them how we can grow our faith in a healthy way.