



August 28, 2023

Mustard Seed and Yeast

Reverend Anne recently spoke to us concerning the parables in Matthew which provide insight into the Kingdom of Heaven. Perhaps because I am both a gardener and a baker, two of them especially resonated with me. Both are found in Chapter 13 of Matthew's gospel, and I think it is no coincidence that they sit side-by-side in the text.

“The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed planted in a field. It is the smallest of all the seeds but it becomes the largest of garden plants and grows into a tree where birds can come and find shelter in its branches. The Kingdom of Heaven is like yeast used by a woman making bread. Even though she used a large amount of flour, the yeast permeated every part of the dough causing it to rise.” (Matthew 13:31-33)

What interesting language Jesus uses to describe the Kingdom of Heaven — a mustard seed and yeast. When we think of royalty and kingdoms we think of places like Versailles or Buckingham or perhaps even the palace at Disney World — places of opulence and grandeur. We certainly don't think of tiny seeds or yeast.

While neither of these items would ever be used on their own, both prove valuable to those of us who spend time in the kitchen — one to provide flavor and the second as a leavening agent. Nearly invisible to the naked eye when taken individually, both must be

measured carefully as a very small amount will result in a significant difference in the dish being prepared.

Again, I think it is no coincidence that Jesus uses edible items to make his point. After all risen bread nourishes hungry stomachs. And that resulting bread — in whatever form it takes around our world — is what causes people to gather, to form community. For it is when we break bread together that we can truly put aside our differences.

Finally, to the gardening part of the mustard seed parable. Not only does the mustard seed grow, but it grows into “a tree where birds can come and find shelter in its branches.” Flavor, growth, and shelter emerge as important truths characteristic of God’s vision of Heaven on Earth.

Who knows — if Jesus were walking the shores of northern Michigan’s seas today, he might use a juicy mustard-slathered hotdog nestled inside a puffy bun to teach his truths. Either way he is encouraging us as believers to lead flavorful, growth-producing lives as we seek to feed, shelter, and provide community for those around us.

~Written by Bonnie Garbrecht

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