

# GRACEPOINT CHURCH

## Weekly Devotional

Once upon a Kingdom: The Stories Jesus Told

Lent 1

Small but Mighty – Ian France –22.2.2026

### Scripture

Matthew 13:31-33

Open your mind and heart as you read the passage of Scripture aloud and then again quietly to yourself. Listen for God's word to you.

Spend some time in worship.

### Observation

Scholars differ on the meaning of these parables. Some see these two parables as a warning about the infiltration and growth of corruption within the Kingdom of God in the face of growing opposition to Jesus' work. Both birds and leaven are used elsewhere in Scripture as indications of corruption and impurity, in the same way the previous parable about the wheat and the tares indicated the presence of corruption. Jesus' listeners would have been shocked to hear Him speak like this about the Kingdom of God, but He continually challenged the accepted norms of the religious, political and economic systems of the day – as He continues to do today.

However, other scholars see these parables as prophetic. This view saw the supernatural growth of the mustard seed and the leaven as beautiful illustrations of how the Good News would spread through the whole world from very tiny beginnings.

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This growth was emphasised because the natural mustard plant grows into a bush rather than a tree and it is unlikely birds would nest in it. The amount of dough was huge – about 40 litres – and far more than a woman would use in a normal household. It would feed about 100 people.

Both these illustrations would have surprised Jesus' listeners who would have recognised the unusual growth of both tree and dough as supernatural.

### *Icebreaker:*

Regarding stories, which advert is being used at the moment that speaks to you? How does it do so? Is it emotional, encouraging, do you remember what it is advertising? How does it impact you when you see it? Why do you think it is so effective?

### **Application**

- Where have you seen growth in the Kingdom of God recently?
- *God's Kingdom is counter-cultural:* In what ways has your life as a Christ-follower and a citizen of the Kingdom of God persuaded you to stand in opposition to society? Have you been able to do this? Do people notice? How does that make you feel?
- How is Jesus challenging your culture and disrupting your world now? What is your response to the evictions on the church's doorstep? Is there anything you think of that you can do to help ease the situation for those involved? How do you feel about taking action?
- *God's Kingdom comes slowly and secretly:* As you look back over the last five or so years, what growth can you see in yourself in your Christian walk? Can you identify changes that have happened in your community, in the country in the world that witness to the growth of the Kingdom of God? How have you seen God's reign spreading around the world? If you struggle to see evidence of this, spend some time during your prayer time asking God to open your eyes to see the growth of His Kingdom.

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- *God's Kingdom comes through you:* The growth Jesus spoke about came through the farmer, planting the seed; and the woman, kneading the dough. What initiative are you taking /can you take to play your part in growing the Kingdom? What might God be saying to you today to encourage you to be pro-active and bring about change? How easy/challenging is it for you to trust Him to help you to follow His call? Why is this so?
- How can the group help you with the struggles you have mentioned during this session?

### Prayer

Pray that God will open your eyes to see signs of His Kingdom growing through the world this week; then pray for one another in regard to the issues that have been raised during your discussion time, and in regard to other needs of the group.

### Service

Remember, God is at work even when we can't see it. During the coming week, look for signs of Kingdom growth, make a note of any you see, and share them with one another next week. Celebrate God's advancement in the world together in some way.

### Bibliography

<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/matthew-13/>



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