

Parable Of The Mustard Seed

Mat 17:20b-21 ... verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

For teaching purposes, let's ascribe personality to a mustard seed. There was a tiny mustard seed who was greatly depressed because, compared to all the other types of seeds it saw, it was the tiniest. The little mustard seed was small like a grain of pepper and would often lament, "I am worthless. I am the least of every seed that can be sown. Just look at the giant corn seed. It is huge compared to me and it has a rich, golden color. I am totally insignificant compared to him."

One day a farmer hears the mustard seed complaining about its lack of size and power. The farmer tells the mustard seed, "You don't understand yourself at all. You are only looking on the outward appearance of things. Within you lies great potential. There is an image on the inside of you that has the potential to produce a plant that will be ten to fifteen feet tall. No corn plant ever grows that large. In truth, you are much more mighty than the corn seed."

The little mustard seed heard what the farmer said, but it was very skeptical. However, it knew that the farmer had much experience in dealing with seeds of all kinds, so it began asking the farmer questions such as, "If that is true, how in the world do I get the image that is within me to manifest itself?" The farmer replied, "Oh, that's simple. All that has to happen is that you must be planted in the ground and die and the image within you will come forth of itself."

"Yikes!" says the mustard seed. "All I have to do is die? What's the matter with you? I don't want to die. I just want to be powerful." The farmer said, "That's the way it is with every seed. In all of creation there is not a single type of seed that can coexist in its present state and release the image within it at the same time. Every seed has to be planted in the ground and die in order for the image within it to come forth. You will no longer exist ... at all ... in your present form. You will no longer be able to be found, no matter how hard anyone looks to find you. You will still exist, but you will be transformed in the process while the image comes forth from you."

The plant responds, "Isn't there any way that I can remain as I am and still release the image within me?" "No," says the farmer. "The transformation process won't

even begin until you are willing to be planted in the ground and die. Here's something else you should know. The transformation process doesn't happen overnight. There is a growth process involved. First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear."

The mustard seed says, "Now wait a minute. First, you're telling me that I'm going to have to die. And then you're telling me that even after I'm willing to make the ultimate sacrifice, I'll have to endure a long growth process before I ever become fruitful? If I'm going to have to pay the high price of dying in order for all of this to happen, then I want to produce fruit ... tomorrow!"

The farmer asks, "What high price are you talking about? When I first heard you, weren't you complaining about how insignificant your life is? Weren't you going on and on about how worthless you are? I'm telling you how you can exchange your powerless life for a tremendously fruitful one and now ... all of a sudden ... you are placing a high price on the same insignificant life you were complaining about before? Which is it? Do you love your life as it is ... or do you hate it?"

The little mustard seed thought about that question for quite a while and then responded, "Well, it's not that I truly love my life as it is, but I am very familiar with it. I know this life that I now have. I know what to expect from day to day. What you're talking about sounds exciting to me, but I am afraid of the unknown. What would that life be like? What if I begin this transformation process and don't like it? Can the process be reversed once it begins?"

"No," says the farmer, "It can't be reversed ... but it can be aborted at any stage. Many seeds stop the growth process at the blade stage of transformation. They are changed from what they were before, but they are not yet producing any fruit. They can remain at the blade stage the rest of their lives if they choose to do so. Some seeds go on to ear stage and remain there. At the ear stage there is just the tiniest little buds of fruit beginning to form and they show great promise of a harvest to come, but they choose to stop growing and never really become fruitful either. Only a very few allow the transformation process to go on to completion so that they bring forward a mighty harvest ... the full corn in the ear."

The mustard seed asks, "Why would any seed choose not to go on to the full corn in the ear? It seems to me that if you choose to die so the growth process can begin, you most certainly would not want to abort the process until the transformation was complete."

The farmer replies, “Right now you are safe in my barn along with all the other seeds. Once you are taken outside, planted in the field, and you’ve become a blade ... at that stage you will be exposed to the elements of the weather than you’ve never experienced before. You will feel the scorching sun beating down on you. It’s not always pleasant, but the truth is, you need the sun in order to grow. You’ll feel the rain coming down on you. Sometimes it comes as a gentle shower and you’ll enjoy that, but at other times it will come down in torrents and the wind will be whipping you back and forth. The rain isn’t always pleasant, but just like you need the sun, you need the rain to keep growing. Not to mention the many predators that will come and try to take your life from you such as locusts and grasshoppers. You should be aware that not all plants survive the growth process. Some simply give up, wither, and die.”

“Gasp! You mean it is possible that even after I begin this process, there is no guarantee that I will make it all the way to harvest? The life within me could die?” The farmer responds, “Sad, but true. Many plants do not survive. The most important thing is for you to concentrate on putting down deep, strong roots. Otherwise, when the sun is scorching hot, you’ll wither. Concentrate on the roots, the part of you that can’t be seen. Don’t pay much attention to what can be seen above ground, even though that’s the part of you that can be seen by others. If your roots (the part of you that can’t be seen) are strong and healthy, the part of you that can be seen will be strong and healthy also.”

The farmer continued, “It’s also very important where you are planted. The ground you are sown in must be free of thorns. It’s possible that those thorn plants can grow so thick that they’ll choke the life out of you and you’ll never bear fruit.”

After thinking about all of this for awhile, the mustard seed asked, “Mr. Farmer, you say that I have this potential of tremendous LIFE on the inside of me. Where did that LIFE come from?”

The farmer answered, “There was an original SEED. His name was Jesus Christ. He was the first seed in the earth that had the LIFE of God within Him. He was willing to be planted in the ground and die in order that more seeds could be produced from His LIFE. You are the product of His sacrifice. You have His LIFE within you and it will sustain you forever. But if you want to bring His LIFE within you to maturity, to full harvest, then you must be willing to lay down your life as a mustard seed in order to become the full grown mustard plant ... ready for harvest. Are you willing to lay down your mustard seed life for the LIFE of Christ within you? He died in the hope that you would.”

Well, the seed asked the farmer, “What hope do I have? It all sounds so impossible.” The farmer said, “You have a great hope! You have the LIFE of Jesus in you, the blueprint of what you will become. You have me, your comforter, the Spirit of God; I will tend you and help with the elements and pests. I will never leave you. You have the Word, the plan of God that designed this whole process, and designed you – And He designed it to work, if you will believe in and cooperate with His plan. But you must trust us all three, and never give up. You will be that fruitful tree one day!