

Sunday, January 19, 2020

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## The Global Gospel Advances

Mark 4:30-34

(Black Bibles p. 839; Children's Bibles p. 1219)

*This is the third of six messages on Missions and Outreach.*

Today's passage: The Parable of the Mustard Seed (Mark 4:30-34)

- What does Jesus emphasize? **Small seed, big tree.**

But gee, *what does this mean?* How do we interpret what this small seed and big tree are about?

- Is it a story of your personal/individual development? Nope.
- Israel's military defeat of its enemies? Not exactly...

(1) Small seed

- How does a Kingdom *come*? Typically, with a display of force. With a marching military.
  - Pilate knew this in his conversation with Jesus in John 19
- Instead, the smallest seed: no army, but instead *one man*.

(2) Slow growth

- Do you check a tree every day to see if it's growing? Too slow, too boring...

- The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. 27 He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how." The Parable of the Growing Seed (Mark 4:26-29)

(3) Big tree

- 2.5 billion people claim the name of Christ today, one third of the world! (But it's not finished...)

We should have many questions!

- What's happening now?
- What needs to be done?
- What's our role?
- What's *my* role?

### Questions for reflection and application

1. Read Mark 4:30-34. Is this how you expect a "Kingdom" to come? Is this how you expect *God's* Kingdom to come?
2. A tree growing is slow progress. You wouldn't watch it every moment, or even every day. There are more exciting things to notice. Are you distracted by shiny, noisy things? :- ) What would those be?
3. *All hands on deck!* What's your role? You don't have to travel over land and sea, although being open to that is a good thing.