

Part of Something Big

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[0 : 00] Take your Bibles tonight and let's open to Matthew chapter 13.

And our focus tonight is going to be on a couple of parables that Jesus told to the multitudes. These two he told to the multitudes, starting with verse 31. So Matthew chapter 13 and verse 31. Now I'm not going to read the text yet because I want us to think on something. How does it feel to be part of something big?

Something big. I mean, how does that feel to you? I mean, all of us, at some point in our lives, maybe right now, well certainly right now, I've been part of something really big.

[1 : 12] Really big. Some of you know, maybe all of you know, that your pastor used to be a Walmart manager. And as a matter of fact, I started with Walmart when I was in high school.

Sweeping floors. And eventually worked my way up to a sales clerk in sporting goods and automotive. Two subjects I knew nothing about.

I was never a fisherman. And even to this day, I don't really do much fishing. And cars, I don't know much about that either. But I sure learned a lot.

And so I worked my way up and eventually got to be an assistant manager. And then from there, store manager and so on and so forth. And in my career as a Walmart manager, I came to realize that I was part of something big.

Walmart's a big thing, isn't it? So it's almost a world unto itself today. But it was not that way when I first started with Walmart. 61 stores when I started with Walmart.

[2 : 23] And I remember attending the annual meeting when it was announced that we had reached a billion dollars in sales. Now, of course, they've gone way past that.

And I was kind of proud of that. And I was a part of something really big. Really big. Most of my Walmart career was spent in Texas.

And, you know, when you live in Texas, you're part of something big. Really big. I mean, just ask them. Anybody here from Texas?

All right. All right. Well, I was going to tell a story, but maybe I shouldn't now. It's really not preaching, dear brother.

In fact, when I tell you the story, you might be appalled. And this is this I'm not impugning the people from Texas. OK. But we lived in Texas during the and near Houston during the boom days.

[3 : 29] In Texas, Houston, especially boomtown. Oil, of course. And it was during those days when a lot of, quote, Yankees were coming to Texas.

Moving to Texas. Moving to Houston. And, you know, that just did not set well with a lot of those Houstonites and Texans. And a lot of really ugly things were said about Yankees, you know, coming down.

And you're not going to believe this, but Sherry and I were sitting there in our living room watching the evening news. And they had, as I recall, a lady announcer, a commentator or whatever, news woman and a man.

And they were there kind of co-telling the news, giving the news. And they were talking about a certain article that had appeared in the paper, kind of an editorial, written by the, I think, the chief of police of Houston.

Sorry, Tom. I think it was the chief of police. And he was bemoaning the fact that all these Yankees were moving to Houston. And he said, he said, you know, Yankees are kind of like hemorrhoids.

[4 : 52] That's what he said. It gets worse. He said, you know, when they come down and go back, it's all right.

But if they come down and stay, you've got big problems. I kid you not. I heard them relating this story.

I didn't read it in the paper, but they were relating it. And to the young lady's credit, she said, well, if Yankees are hemorrhoids, then what part of the anatomy does that make Houston? Will you forgive me? Okay. Texans, I guess, still today, big ego, big state, and a great state. I enjoyed living in Texas. Had to add that in there, too. But I was part of something big. You know, huge state. Working for a big company.

[5 : 54] Walmart. And, you know, really, we live in a big country. Not necessarily the biggest country in the world in regard to land mass or population.

But a big country. Great country. Right? We're part of something big. Really big. Now, honestly, our country is probably more fragile than we know.

But it's a big country. It's just great to be a part of something big, isn't it? And I remember after God called me to the ministry, and I attended my first Southern Baptist convention.

It was in Atlanta, I think. And I sat there, you know, in that coliseum, and with, you know, I don't know, 15,000, 16,000 pastors and other ministers, SBC ministers.

And I thought, you know, I'm really part of something big here. And if Walmart is a world unto itself, certainly the SBC is a world unto itself.

[7 : 10] Something big. Something big. Something big. Really big. How does it feel to be a part of something big? Sherry and I live in student housing, or I did live, and Sherry's still living there.

And one of these days we'll get here. But seminary housing, right across from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, both those things sit across the street from Bellevue Baptist Church.

The great Bellevue Baptist Church. Fort God, some of them call it. Some call it. Big thing. Isn't it great to be part of something big?

Did you know that Highland Park Baptist Church is part of something infinitely bigger than Walmart, Texas, the USA, the SBC?

Infinitely bigger. We're part of something big. I just thought I might want to tell you that. Because I think about right now, some of you are thinking we're pretty small.

[8 : 32] Much smaller than we used to be. And yet you're a part of something big. Huge. And getting bigger. And one day we'll fill the whole world.

When Jesus comes and rules all the kingdoms of the world. That is what I believe these two parables is about. I really do.

Now I know there are alternate views about it. The parable of the mustard seed. The parable of the leaven. There are post-millennial views of these parables.

And I don't take that view. I believe these parables are all about. First, the growth. Of the kingdom. And secondly, the influence. Of the kingdom. In our world. Jesus is telling parables here. Jesus did that a lot in his ministry.

[9 : 34] And parable, of course, as we might define it. And it has been defined. Is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. We could come up with other definitions.

Parables are sometimes hard to interpret. And the tendency is for guys like me. Because we like to wow the crowd. We have a tendency to want to pick apart the parable.

And attach significance to every part of it. But Jesus did not intend to attach significance to every element of the parable.

There is a meaning he is conveying. And in these two parables he is conveying some truths about the kingdom. The kingdom of God.

A kingdom of which we are a part. Something really big. And he started these parables. These parables of the kingdom.

[10 : 38] There in the first part of chapter 13. It says there in verse 3. If you might notice. If we could set up the context here. Kind of an introduction to these two parables. In verse 3.

The Bible says. And he spoke many things to them in parables. Saying. And then he tells a parable. And if you'll skip on down there to verse 9.

At the close of the parable. Jesus says. He who has ears. Let him hear. Because a parable. Is a story that is a bit cryptic.

In a sense. And in order to hear and understand the parable. It must be granted to you. To hear and understand. And Jesus closes that first parable with those words.

He who. Literally. He who has an ear that's able to hear. Let him hear. In verse 10.

[11 : 38] Then. The disciples. Came. And said to him. I think they just kind of. Had a little private meeting. And they had a big question.

What was their question? An obvious question. They asked. Why do you speak to them in parables? Implication. Why don't you just tell them straight out. Plainly. Why the parables? Something has changed. The disciples are saying to Jesus. Something changed in your approach here. Where you've been preaching plainly. And now you're preaching in mysteries.

Why are you doing that? Jesus answered. To you. It has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

But to them. It has not been granted. That's his answer. To you. He said. It's been granted.

[12:35] To have ears to hear. And understand. The mysteries of the kingdom. We'll get back to the mysteries of the kingdom. In just a minute. But. To them. It has not been granted.

Them. I believe. Refers to the chapter. Before. Chapter 12. Refers. Most specifically. To the Pharisees. And you might remember.

And you can go back. And look at it. At your own leisure. You might remember. That the Pharisees. Ascribed. The work of Jesus. The miracles of Jesus. To the devil. Thus.

Blaspheming. The Holy Spirit. And so. Jesus. Now. In the verse. In chapter 13. Says. To them. It has not been granted. That is. I'm speaking now. From now on. In parables.

You will know the truth. But they will not know the truth. It's pretty serious. Isn't it? And so. He. Tells. These parables. About the.

[13:34] Quote. Mysteries. Of the kingdom. Of heaven. What mystery. Would that be? He spoke. You and I. Are part of it.

In fact. I doubt. Very seriously. That. Initially. That the disciples. Even got it. The mysteries.

Of the kingdom. Is. I believe. The age. In which. We're living. Right now. And the reason. Why the disciples. Had trouble. Getting it.

And why the Pharisees. And the Jewish leaders. And the Jewish. People. In general. Had a hard time. Understanding. What was happening. Here. And why. If Jesus. Is indeed.

The Messiah. Why he has not. Taken the throne. And raised. A great army. And. Attacked. The Romans. To free them. And to usher. In the kingdom. And they're wondering.

[14:28] Why he has not done that. And the reason is. Is because. They don't know. The mysteries. Of the kingdom. They didn't know. Anything about the church. They didn't really know.

Anything about the cross. In fact. A few chapters later. Jesus. Has his disciples. There. And he. Is teaching them.

The Bible says. Plainly. About. His death. How he would be. Delivered up. And would be. Killed. And would be. Raised from the dead. And Peter.

Takes him aside. And rebukes him. Do you remember? And. If I might paraphrase. He said. No. No. No. It's not going to happen to you.

The cross is not going to happen to you. And Jesus. Turned. Around. Turned to Peter. Looked him eye to eye. And said. Get. Behind me.

[15:28] Satan. You see. It just. Did not. Fit. Their eschatology. That. The Messiah. Would come. And then die. Didn't fit.

Their eschatology. It makes sense to them. In fact. They were operating. By the Old Testament. Eschatology. And to the Old Testament. For the Old Testament.

Prophets. It was this equation. Elijah. Messiah. Kingdom. So. Elijah. Has come. That's John. The Baptist. Messiah.

Has now come. Because Elijah. Identified him. Behold. The Lamb of God. Which taketh away. The sin of the world. And so now. Then. He has come. To inaugurate.

The kingdom. To usher in the kingdom. And it didn't happen. That way. And it just didn't make sense. To Peter. Or his disciples. It certainly didn't make sense. To. The Jews. Because there.

[16:24] Is a. Parentheses. In God's plan. And when Messiah comes. Then there is. The parentheses.

The. Church. Which would be. Of course. Inaugurated. And. Established. By the death.

Burial. And resurrection. Of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so. Jesus says. Then. To his. Disciples here. To you.

That has been granted. And eventually. They did get it. The mysteries. Of the kingdom. The kingdom. Of God. What is the kingdom. Of God. Well. Even though. I have. Identified.

The mysteries. Of the kingdom. Identified. That with the church. The kingdom. Is not the church. Per se. Because the kingdom. Existed before the church. And the kingdom.

[17:18] Will exist. All out. Into eternity. After the church. Age is over. So the church. Is not the kingdom. Per se. Though we are a part. Of the kingdom. We are God's kingdom.

Operation. Right now. In this world. Today. We are the expression. Of the kingdom. The visible. Observable. Expression.

Of God's kingdom. Work. On this planet. Today. You see. Because the kingdom. Resides. In our hearts. Kingdom.

Is a spiritual. Thing. In this day. God's throne. Is set up. In the heart. Of. His church. The members of his church.

The body of Christ. It's set up there. And operates there. And collectively. We as a church. We. Represent. The expression. Of his kingdom.

[18:14] And so these parables. Are all about that. The two parables. We're going to focus on. Here tonight. Speak of the growth.

Of this kingdom. The expansion. Of this kingdom. Until. As we sang. A moment ago. The whole world. Is filled. With his kingdom.

And Jesus. Comes. And establishes. His. Millennial reign. Literal. Reign. Upon this earth. And the kingdoms.

Of this world. Will be. His kingdom. Him. All right. So. Let's look at these two parables. Let me read them first. Just a few verses.

In fact. Three in all. He. Presented. Another parable. To them. Saying. This verse 31. By the way. Chapter 13. The kingdom.

[19:09] Of heaven. Is like. Like what? A mustard seed. Which a man. Took. Took and sowed. In his field.

And. This. Is smaller. Than all other seeds. But when it is full grown. It is larger. Than the garden plants. It becomes a tree. So that the birds. Of the air. Come and nest.

In its branches. That's the parable. Of the mustard seed. He spoke. Another parable. Verse 33. The kingdom. Of heaven.

Is like. It's like. Like what? Leaven. Leaven. Like leaven. Which a woman. Took and hid. In three pecks. Or. A bushel.

Of flour. Until it was. All leavened. Now. There are those. Who claim. Who believe. That.

[20:03] The mustard seed. That grows to a tree. Is. An. Abortion. It. It. It. It. Is. That. Jesus. Is. Not. Speaking. Of. The kingdom.

But. He's. Talking. About. The work. Of. The devil. And. That. The leaven. Of course. Is. Evil. And. Sin. And. The idea. Of.

It. Permeating. The world. But. Just. Not. What. This is. About. It's. About. The growth. Of. The kingdom. See. I. I. Just. Think.

That. The disciples. Were. Starting. To. Do. The mass. Here. And. If. Jesus. Is. Indeed. The messiah. And. He's. Come. To. Establish. His kingdom. And. Yet. He's. Not. Put.

Together. An army. And. He's. Not. Taken. Any. Kind. Of. Leadership. Role. In. That. And. He. And. So. For. Then. Then. We're. Just. A. Small. Little. Number. Here. And. I. I. Don't. Understand. How. This. Could.

[20:56] Be. This. Could. Qualify. As. A. Kingdom. And. So. Jesus. Tells. This. Parable. About. The. Growth. Of. The. Kingdom. And. He. Likens. It. To. A.

Mustard. Seed. And. In. The. Parable. Jesus. Says. It's. The. Smallest. Of. The. Seeds. You know. The. Liberals. Like. Have. A. Day. Seed.

Period. But. The. Smallest. Of. Garden. Variety. Seeds. And. Then. They. Also. Scoff. At. This. Idea. Of. A. Tree. And. They. Say.

A. Mustard. Seed. Grows. To. Be. A. Mustard. Plant. But. Not. A. Tree. Something. Very. Small. And. Yet. They. Tell. Us. That. In. The. Middle. East. That. Mustard.

Plant. Not. Only. Birds. To. Rest.

[21:57] On. Its. Branches. But. Also. To. Build. Nest. Or. So. Now. Putting. That. Aside. Because. None. Of. That. Really. Matters. The. Idea. Is. Not. What. A. Mustard. Seed. Is. Or. Whether. It's. The. Smallest.

Or. Whatever. Or. That. It. Could. Grow. To. Be. A. Tree. The. Idea. Is. A. She might.

Put. On. A. Piece. Of. Paper. But. Little. Seed. Can. Grow. Into. A. Tree. That. Can. Support. Birds. In. Their. Nest. And. He. Says. The. Kingdom. Of. Heaven. Is. Like. That. It's. Like. That. I. Believe. That. The. Mustard. Seed. Represents. Jesus. By. The. Way. Do. Notice. That. It's. Seed. Singular. And. Not. Plural. Seed.

[22 : 59] And. It's. A. Reference. To. The. Beginning. Of. The. Kingdom. The. Kingdom. Work. The. Mysteries. Of. That. Kingdom. In. This. Age. And. It. Began. With. One. Seed.

And. That. One. Seed. Was. Jesus. And. He. Started. Out. Very. Insignificantly. Didn't. He. In. Mark. Chapter. One. Verse. Fif.

When. Jesus. Inaugurates. His. Ministry. His. His. Preaching. Ministry. The. He. Said. This. The. Time. Is. Fulfilled. And. The. Kingdom.

Of. God. Is. At. Hand. Repent. And. Believe. In. The. Gospel. You. See. He. Is. A. Kingdom. Of. One. At. That. Point. In. The.

Sense. Of. Of. God's. Program. His. Kingdom. Program. At. The. Beginning. Of. Jesus. He's. A. Kingdom. Of. One. Just. One. Seed. And. He. Started.

[23 : 51] Out. So. Insignificantly. Didn't. Jesus. Was. Born. In. Bethlehem. The.

Smallest. Micah. Said. The. Most. Insignificant. Among. All. The. Other. Provinces. And. That's. Where. God. In. His. Divine. Plan.

Had. Jesus. His. Son. Born. In. Bethlehem. And. Not. Just. In. An. Insignificant. Town. But. In. Such. Humble. Beginnings.

Think. About. It. You. Know. How. Jesus. Began. Born. To. A. Peasant. Couple. Insignificant. Nobody. Knew. Who. They. Were. Humble. Surroundings. Of. Course. Born. In. Some. Crude. Stable. First.

[24 : 47] Baby. Crib. Was. A. Feeding. Trough. Can. you. Imagine. The. Surroundings. Ladies. Can. you. Imagine. Having. A. Baby. In. A. Place. Like. That. And.

He. Was. Born. In. Such. An. Insignificant. Way. In. An. Insignificant. Town. Bethlehem. He. Grew. Up. In. Nazareth. Son. Of. A. Carpenter. Common. Laborer. And. You. Remember. Nathaniel. Said. In. John. One. Forty.

Six. Can. Anything. Good. Come. Out. Of. Nazareth. They. were. talking. about. the. mustard. seed. here. By. comparison. the. mustard. seed. what. an. insignificant. thing. and. by. comparison. to. what. the. kingdom. will. one. day. come. even. beyond. our. day.

He. started. so. small. insignificant. insignificant. town. raised. in. a. in. a. Nazareth. that. was. not. even. well. thought. of. in. the. day.

[25 : 50] Nothing. good. ever. comes. out. of. that. town. And. his. humble. beginnings. And. the. prophet. Isaiah. of. course. prophesied. of. that. in. Isaiah. chapter. 53. verse. 2. when. he. said. for. he. grew. up. before. him. like. a. tender. shoot.

And. like. a. root. out. of. a. parched. ground. He. has. no. stately. form. I. kind. of. like. the. new. American. standard. in. that. No. stately. form.

And. we're. talking. about. the. Messiah. We're. talking. about. the. son. of. God. And. he. had. no. He. was. born. and. grew. up. with. no. stately. form.

No. one. would. look. at. Jesus. and. say. One. day. he's. going. to. be. a. king. Not. anyway. No. stately. form. Or. majesty.

That. we. should. look. upon. him. That. is. Jesus. would. walk. down. the. street. Nobody's. going. to. turn. their. head. and. look. at. him. No. majesty. about. him. No. stately. form. about. him.

[26 : 56] No. appearance. Isaiah. said. No. appearance. that. we. should. be. attracted. to. him. That. want. to. establish. this. idea. of. the. seed.

In. significant. little. mustard. seed. The. smallest. of. the. garden. variety. seeds. Representing. Jesus. And. how. insignificant. was. his.

Entry. into. this. world. His. humble. beginning. And. even. after. his. ministry. was. over.

After. his. death. And. after. his. resurrection. Guess. how. big. his. church. was. 120. 120.

Now. that's. bigger. than. the. average. Southern. Baptist. church. today. 120. But. 120. You'd. have. to. agree. Very. small. Considering. it. was. the. only. church. in. the. world.

[27 : 57] The. only. one. 120. I. mean. by. the. day. of. Pentecost.

This. is. after. the. resurrection. By. the. day. of. Pentecost. The. church. in. Jerusalem. Which. was. the. only. church. in. the. world. Numbered. 120.

We're talking about a mustard seed here. A mustard seed. Well. What about the tree?
See the mustard seed was planted. Jesus came into the world. Though in an insignificant way. Was planted in this world.

And. That seed became a tree. A mustard tree. Now forget about. Any significance. About the branches.

[28 : 55] And there. Has been speculation. About. The tree. Or the. Rather the birds. Resting in the. In the. Branches. That they are the Gentiles.

And maybe. Maybe that's true. But. Let's just. Let's just consider the. On the face of it. Message here. In the parable. And the idea is.

One of comparison. From the smallest. Imaginable seed. That becomes a tree. The tree. Because this is a kingdom parable.

And it. Is specifically. Related to the mysteries. Of the kingdom. Something that has. Now started. These disciples.

With these disciples. Does represent. In that sense. The church. But doesn't end there. Because ultimately. It represents.

[29 : 50] The eternal kingdom. Of God. Forever and ever. Peter. What about. The mustard. Tree. Started back.

There in Acts. Chapter 2. In verse 41. In fact. We can. Map out. The growth.

Of that mustard. Seed. To a tree. As we go through. The book of Acts. Acts. Chapter 2. In verse 41. And Peter. Preaches that great.

Sermon. It's the day. Of Pentecost. And in verse 41. The Bible. Tells us. Here. That. That day. There were added.

About. How many souls. Three. Thousand. Man. That's. That's something. Isn't it? I mean. All in one day.

[30 : 47] Three. Thousand. So. Something's. Beginning. To happen. So we go. From 120. Disciples. On the day. Of Pentecost.

To suddenly. Three. Thousand. One hundred. And twenty. I mean. This is just. Kind of a. Rounded off. Number. I'm sure. Can you imagine. There just being.

An even. Three. Thousand. Souls. But let's just. Take it. At face value. Three. Thousand. Souls. And then. When we go. Over to. Chapter four. And verse four.

Peter again. Has preached. And the bible says. But many of those. Who had heard the message. Believed. That's a real encouragement. To me.

As a preacher. Of the gospel. That many will believe. We faithfully. Preach. God's word. And preach. The gospel. Not just from the pulpit.

[31 : 44] But out there. In the streets. And in the highways. And byways. Many will believe. And so. Many did believe. And the number. Of the men. This is just the men.

Came to be about. How many? Five thousand. Just men. Now. Don't you think. We can assume. There were many women.

Also saved. I would imagine. Things were true then. As they are now. That. Women are a little bit. More spiritual minded. Than men. And maybe. There were more men.

Than. Or more women. Than men. Saved that day. I don't know. But certainly. We have more than. Five thousand. Being saved here. So. Three thousand. Five thousand.

And the bible. Is not trying. To give us. Every detail. We can assume. There were. Others saved. As well. And the church. Is growing. Right here.

[32 : 39] In Jerusalem. It is now. Almost. A mega church. In fact. Probably. Was a mega church. By then. Well. Let's look over. To Acts chapter 6. In verse 1.

Though we don't have. Any numbers. To attach here. The bible. Says. In the opening verse. Of chapter 6. And now. At this time. While the disciples.

Were increasing. In number. A complaint. Arose. On the part. And so forth. And you know. The story. And we have deacons. As a result. Of this.

But the idea. Here. The thing I want us. To get. Is that. We've gone from. 120. To 3,000. Saved. In one day. And then. 5,000. Men saved.

And also. Women saved. And by the time. We get to chapter 6. We have a multitude. I mean. The church. Is growing. Exponentially. And it's now.

[33 : 31] So large. That the apostles. Are not able. To take care. Of everything. Like they once did. Needed servants. We're talking about.

A mustard tree. Started with. A little seed. Some little baby. Born in a stable. There in Bethlehem. And grew up. In Nazareth. And. And by the time.

We come to the end. Of his ministry. Just 120. But now. We're growing. Leaps. And bounds. And. God's people. Are part of something. Big. And something. That's getting bigger. And bigger.

And when we go. To chapter 8. In verse 1. We have the gospel. Being. Preached. Throughout the known world. See up until this time.

The church is pretty much isolated. And right there in Jerusalem. And they're not willing. To branch out. They. Hadn't. Started any. Any. Church planting programs.

[34 : 28] And really. By this time. They didn't do that either. But. Persecution came. And the result of the persecution. Was. That God's people. Were scattered abroad. And what did they do?

They went everywhere. Preaching. Went everywhere. Preaching. God's kingdom. Is. Growing. Not only. In number. But now.

Growing. Geographically. Moving out. From Jerusalem. And out. To the known parts. Of the world. And when we get. To. Chapter 8. In verse 25.

We have the gospel. Going to the Samaritans. So now. It has just been the Jews. And now. It is moving to the Samaritans.

The. Quote. Half Jews. The gospel is growing. The tree is growing. From the little mustard seed. To. Now. A. Larger tree. And when we get to chapter 10.

[35 : 24] We have the Gentiles. Also. Receiving. The good news. Of Jesus Christ. And being brought into the kingdom. I don't know the numbers.

Here. The Bible doesn't tell us. The Bible. Doesn't seem to be as concerned about numbers. As we are. But it's growing.

Growing. Leaps. And bounds. And when we get to the last. Chapter of Acts. And we're skipping a whole lot. Of course. Because we have.

Paul's ministry. His. Church planting ministry. His missionary ministries. And others. Who. Were his companions. And we have. The gospel. And churches.

Being planted. All around. The known world. And when we get. To the last chapter. In verse 31. Of chapter 28. Preaching. Or. Verse 30.

[36 : 20] And he stayed. Two full years. In his own rented quarters. And was welcoming. All who came to him. Preaching the kingdom. This is what Paul was doing. Preaching the kingdom of God. And teaching.

Concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. With all openness. Unhindered. Some of you English. People out there.

Grammar. People. You should know that. That last word. In the sentence. Is an adverb. Kind of odd. We wouldn't write that way.

Literally. It says. That the Lord Jesus Christ. Was preached. With all openness. Unhinderedly. That would be a literal translation. Unhinderedly. So Acts just ends there. Just. Ends abruptly.

[37 : 16] Right there. The gospel. Is being preached. And spreading. Around the world. Unhinderedly. It's becoming. It's becoming something. Big. And today.

Huge. And yet. It's. Not over yet. Because one day. Jesus will come. And rule. Over all the kingdoms.

Of the world. In Psalm 72. The great Psalm. Psalm 72. To give the king. Your judgments. Oh God. Verse 6. May he. Come down. Like rain. Upon the moon. Grass. In his days. May the righteous. Flourish. In abundance. Of peace.

Till the moon. Is no more. May he also. Rule from sea. To sea. And from the river. To the ends. Of the earth. Verse 11. And let all kings. Bow down.

[38 : 15] Before him. All nations. Serve him. Now. That is. God's eternal kingdom. One day. Will come. We're taught to pray. By the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done. On earth. As it is in heaven. The answer to that prayer. Has not yet been answered fully. Because God's kingdom.

Will one day come. Jesus will come. And. Rule. Forever and ever. Revelation 11.

15. The kingdoms of this world. Are become the kingdoms. Of our Lord. And of his Christ. And he shall reign. Forever. And ever.

You see. Listen. Highland Park Baptist Church. We're part of something big.

[39 : 15] Really big. Really. Really big. And getting bigger. Isn't that a good thing?

So take heart. Be encouraged. We're God. Part of God's kingdom work. Then we have the parable of the leaven.

The emphasis. Or the message. Is basically the same. The idea. The concept. Is the same. Little seed. Turning into a tree. The parable of the leaven.

A little bit of leaven. An insignificant amount of leaven. Leaven. Put into the lump. And it. Affects. The entire lump. With just a little bit.

In fact. A very little bit. Let's look at it again. The kingdom of heaven. Is like leaven. Which a woman took. And hid. In three pecks of flour. I don't know.

[40 : 22] If. You understand here. But. That's a lot of flour. Makes a lot of dough. In fact.

As I've researched. It would feed. Probably a hundred people. That's making a lot of bread. The idea. Is that little bit of yeast. In that huge amount.

Of flour. Or dough. The idea. Is not so much. The growth. Though that. Though that is part of it. The idea here. Is influence. Influence. What was. Done. With the leaven. It was hid. In there. Not. And if it represents. The church. And I believe it does. It's not. It's not that we're. To be secret saints. And somehow.

[41 : 22] We're hidden. From everyone. It is. The idea. Is that we are. Of a different kind. Than the flower. And we're placed in there. And.

We are. We permeate. The entire. Lump. It is. It is. Our influence. I don't mean.

Political influence. Though. I think. We ought to be. Good citizens. And ought to be. Good. Good. Christian citizens. And we ought to. Vote. According to.

God's instructions. And. We ought to be involved. And very active. There isn't anything wrong. With. With Christians. Running for office. Some political office. Not anything wrong with that.

And we ought to be active. In that way. But. Listen. Dear people. The influence. The greatest influence. We have. Upon this world. Is. With the gospel.

[42 : 17] Of Jesus Christ. And that's the idea here. And so not only. Is this kingdom. Growing. Expanding.

Advancing. All around this globe. But it is doing so. By influencing. Influencing. The whole lump. With the gospel. Of Jesus Christ.

That his name. Would be known. All. Around the world. And sometimes. It's a. A thing.

You don't see. So much. On the surface. It's kind of sometimes. Behind the scenes. And then. When God. Allows us. To see. What he has done.

Through his. People. It astounds us. And we're amazed. I'll give you a good example. And close with this example. Several years ago.

[43 : 15] I had the opportunity. The privilege. Of traveling to China. Traveled with a bunch of preachers. Bunch of preachers. From Mississippi. And.

Our. Mission. Was to. Go to. A. A. City. In the northern part. Of China. A. A target.

City. For the. International. Mission. Mission. Board. We had no. No. Missionaries. In. Xiamasu. China. And.

Our. Mission. Was. To. Go there. And make. Contacts. And. Try to. Give information. To the. IMB. So that. They might.

Eventually. Discover. Some. Platforms. Where. Mission. Work. Could be. Started. As a. Tremendous. Experience. Do you know.

[44 : 13] That. Not too many. Years ago. It was thought. That. China. Was an. Total. Almost. Totally. Atheist. Nation. And.

Yet. Inside. That. Country. There. Are. Literally. Millions. And. Millions. Of. Christians. Multiplied. Millions. Many. Of. Them. Worshipping. Underground.

And. I never. Will. Forget. When. We. Got. There. On. That. Saturday. Night. Our. First. Order. Of. Business. Was. To. Attend. The. Central. Church. The. Government. Church.

The. Christian. Church. You know. But. It. Was. Sanctioned. By. The. Government. Had. To. Report. Everything. To. The. Government. And. So. For. So. We. Attended. That. Church. And. Just. Totally.

Amazed. We. Got. There. A. Little. Bit. Late. And. The. Only. Seats. That. Were. Available. Were. Right. On. The. Front. Row. And. This. Was. Very. Large. Church. In. Fact. There. May.

[45 : 11] Have. Been. Our. Translator. Told. Watching.

The. Service. By. By. TV. And. So. Here. We. Are. Three. No. Excuse me. Four. Baptist. Ministers.
And. A. Chinese. Translator.

And. We. Come. Walking. Right. Down. The. Aisle. And. We. Sit. Right. On. The. Front. Seat.
Nothing. Was. Done.

In. English. For. Us. We. Weren't. Even. Recognized. As. Even. Being. There. Because. That. So.
They.

Just. Didn't. And. I. Just. Sat. There. And. I. Thought. My. My. My. All.

[46 : 07] Of. These. Christians. And. Came. Time. For. The. Prayer. Time. All.

Those. Maybe. Thousand. Prayed. Out. Loud. All. All. Same. Time. Out. Loud. And. My. First.
Impression. Was. This. Is. Utter. Bedlam. And. Then. It. Occurred. To. Me. That.

God. Was. Able. To. Distinguish. Every. Prayer. This. Is. In. China. China. Is. Not. A. Godless.
Christless. Nation.

Any more. Not. Among. Its. People. Millions. Multiplied. Millions. Of. Christians. And. Yet. Not. Too.
Many. Years. Ago. We. Didn't. Even. Know. That. And. When. Missionaries. Were. Able.

[46 : 58] To. Get. Back. Into. China. Discovered. Not. Only. Underground. But. Even. Boldly. The.
Witness. Of. Christ. Was. Evident. In. That. Great.

Nation. About. A. Little. Bit. Eleven. Missionaries. Like. Bertha. Smith. Charles.

Culpepper. And. Others. Who. Planted. The. seed. Of. The. gospel. Others. Long. Before. Them.
And.

That. Seed. That. Christian. Witness. Like. A. little. Leaven. In. A. huge. Amount. Of. Flour. Is.
Leavening.

The. Entire. Lump. I. don't. Mean. That. Everyone. Is. Coming. To. Christ. And. Not. Everyone. In.
This. World. Will. Come. To. Christ. But. Everyone. Will.

[47 : 52] Hear. The. Name. Of. Jesus. His. Name. Will. Be. Exalted. Around. This. World. And.
You. And. I. Are. Part. Of. That. Isn't.

That. Great. The. Question. Is. How. Are. We. Participating. With. That. It.

Always. Comes. Down. To. That. Question. And. I'm. Not. Trying. To. Bring. You. Down. Off. The.
High. But. Dear. People. We. Have. To.

Participate. With. That. We're. Part. Of. Something. Big. Yes. Something. Growing. Yes.
Something. Very. Influential. In.

This. World. And. It. Is. Our. Obligation. Under. The. Leadership. Of. The. Lord. Jesus. Christ. To.

[48 : 49] Plug. In. Where. God. Wants. Us. To. Plug. In. To. Be. A. Part. Of. The. Advancement.
Of. His. Kingdom. Right. Here. In. Bartlesville.

First. In. In. In. In. In. to the ends of the world. Amen.