

# When Jesus Comes to Church - Part 2

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[ 0 : 00 ] Take your Bibles and open them, if you would, to Luke chapter 13.

And it is a passage that we started to look at last week. And so if you were not here last Sunday, I'm sorry about that. But I will give kind of a review on where we were and what we talked about last time.

I've kind of set it up for what we shall look at as we conclude this particular text of Scripture. Our text is verses 10 through 21. So Luke 13, verses 10 through 21.

Let me go ahead and read the passage. Now, he was teaching, and that, of course, is Jesus' teaching. In one of the synagogues on the Sabbath day.

So he's teaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath. Those are very important kind of clues as to the setting.

[ 1 : 11 ] And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity 18 years and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up. But when Jesus saw her, he called her to him and said to her, Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity.

And he laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight and glorified God. But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath.

And he said to the crowd, There are six days on which men ought to work. Therefore, come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day.

And the Lord then answered him and said, Hypocrite, does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it away to water it?

So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan is bound, think of it for 18 years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?

[ 2 : 19 ] And when he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame, and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him. Then he said, What is the kingdom of God like?

And to what shall I compare it? It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and put in his garden, and it grew and became a large tree, and the birds of the air nested in its branches.

And again he said, To what shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in her measures, in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened.

And he went throughout the cities and villages, teaching and journeying through Jerusalem. So he's on his way to Jerusalem. He stops at this place somewhere in Judea.

We don't really know where it is. Nothing is said about the name of the town, the name of the place. The occasion is very clear from the passage. He's teaching once again in the synagogue.

[ 3 : 19 ] Now we started to look at this passage last Sunday, and again Jesus was permitted, given permission. We can kind of read between the lines and understand this.

He was given permission by the ruler of the synagogue to teach on that particular Sabbath. And that was a very normal thing to be done in those days. Jesus quite often was asked by the ruler of the synagogue.

That's just the guy who's kind of in charge of things in the synagogue. Very common for them to ask Jesus to teach while he's visiting in the community. It was a very normal thing to ask visiting rabbis and teachers and other people like Jesus to teach.

So this was a very normal thing. Now the synagogue, remember, is not the temple. This is not a temple. They didn't have kind of satellite temples in the various cities throughout Judea and Galilee. They had synagogues. Synagogues were a place, a meeting place for the Jews, and every community had at least one synagogue. Many of them had more than one.

[ 4 : 26 ] I mentioned last week that Jerusalem had upwards of 500 synagogues. And so it was a very common thing, normal thing. And so there were a lot of synagogues and just simply a meeting place.

And they would gather there. The Jews would gather there typically on the Sabbath day. They certainly would gather on the Sabbath day. And that would be Saturday. And of course they would gather there for prayer, for Bible instruction, and also for worship.

And so that's why many scholars kind of see the synagogue as somewhat of a precursor for the church houses that would, of course, evolve much later in Christendom.

And really in terms of the physical, kind of physical layout, as well as the primary function of the synagogue, the synagogue, the Jewish synagogue, did mirror in many ways the New Testament churches.

So that's why I entitled my message, you know, When Jesus Came to Church. Now, the church hadn't been established yet, but in a sense it was the precursor for the meeting, assembly of God's people for Bible instruction.

[ 5 : 36 ] So here's Jesus invited, and he is there in the synagogue. And there are at least, I said, at least three points of significance from this passage, this occasion, when Jesus came to church or when Jesus was asked to teach in the synagogue.

And I have called these three glorious realities because they really are glorious realities that are revealed for us in this passage.

And the first one, and we looked at this last week, in fact, we looked at the first two last Sunday. The first one, just by way of review, is the pursuit of grace.

We can see in this passage that grace pursued this woman who was crippled and had been crippled for 18 years. Verse 10 says, Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath, and behold, behold.

And that's a significant word to be used in this passage because it tells us something about how this all came about. Behold. It's a word that means, we could even translate it, look.

[ 6 : 46 ] Look. It suggests kind of a suddenness, a kind of a surprising thing. And behold, there was a woman. Look.

A woman who had a spirit of infirmity 18 years. That's how the New King James words it. A spirit of infirmity.

Some illness, some infirmity that was caused and brought about by an evil spirit, a demon. And she had been under this, in this condition and under this extreme suffering for 18 years.

And it even describes a little bit about that. She was bent over. Some versions have doubled over. So literally, she was so doubled over that very likely she had to crawl or creep or maybe, at the very least, use a cane.

And she'd been in this condition for 18 years and she could in no way straighten herself or raise herself up. All right. So here's the setting.

[ 7 : 49 ] This woman entered the synagogue. I think she entered while Jesus was teaching or right at the beginning of his time of teaching. That's why it was such a sudden kind of thing, a surprising thing.

She had not been there before and her presence there was, again, somewhat unusual and surprising. And so, why was she there? That's a natural question.

Why was she there? Why did she come in at that time? Why was she there at that particular time? And the obvious answer is because Jesus was there. Okay? Jesus was there and he was the only solution to her extreme suffering.

And so, we ask, did she go to the synagogue that particular Sabbath day looking for Jesus? Did she go looking for Jesus? Well, perhaps she did.

In fact, I would suggest that there were many there that day who were not normally there on the Sabbath day in the synagogue, at least not on an ongoing basis, but they were there because Jesus was there and they were curious about him.

[ 8 : 53 ] They were searching some answers about him, perhaps. And some were even there because they were desperate regarding their condition. And so, certainly, this woman could have been there because she was searching for Jesus.

She heard that he was there and she was there because he was there. But also, we might ask, was she there because Jesus drew her there? And I think very definitely she was there because Jesus

drew her to that place at that particular time.

And we even see Jesus taking the initiative in verse 12. But when Jesus saw her, remember, he's teaching and suddenly she's there and he saw her, he called her to him.

He took the initiative and said to her, woman, you are loosed from your infirmity. The pursuit of grace. And we talked about that last week. Second, we considered the power of God.

Here's the second reality that's very clear from the passage, stands out from the passage, the very power of God, of course, God the Son, in this case, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[10:01] Everything in this story reveals the purpose of God in displaying his sovereign power in a number of ways.

Jesus revealed his sovereign power to restore this suffering woman who was instantaneously and completely, wholly healed by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus made her straight. Also, his power is revealed to redeem the sinner because she was not only healed physically, but she was also saved that day.

She was and had become now a daughter of Abraham, Jesus said, which is a reference to her faith, her salvation, Abraham being the father of the faithful.

But also, he revealed his power to rebuke the satanic as well because he, in the first place, delivered this woman from the bondage and oppression of satanic powers in her life, but he also unmasked the satanic origin and influence of the Pharisees' religion of works, which is what they were propagating among the Jews and many people were believing.

[11:18] It was a salvation by human achievement rather than by divine accomplishment. And so, Jesus then confronted this satanic religion and he saved this woman.

So, he revealed his power. And what a picture this is of the sovereign and gracious work of God in salvation. He passes over the proud and self-righteous and he chooses this poor woman, the humble, like this woman.

He draws her to himself and he graciously saves her. So, the pursuit of grace, the power of God. Then we have a third reality from this text that kind of takes us, not really in a different direction because this all fits together.

In fact, really, I would say to you that this woman and what Jesus did for her and that he healed her and especially saved her really presents the perfect backdrop for this third thing, this third glorious reality we see in the passage.

And it is this, the progress of the gospel. The progress of the gospel. This is, as they say, the big picture.

[12:35] That's what we are about to see, the big picture. And so, after this planned interruption, and I think it was planned, I think it was orchestrated by Jesus, and I'm talking about the healing of this woman, the saving of this woman, again, a perfect backdrop for what Jesus is about to teach.

After that interruption, then Jesus gets down to his teaching. Now, perhaps he had already started it, maybe even introduced it, maybe even a passage of scripture was read, which was the normal way that they would begin, the scripture would be read, and then the teacher would sit down and then give the sermon, give the meaning.

So, perhaps all that had been done, and then this interruption with this woman who was doubled over, and he heals her and saves her, and then he begins to teach, and he says in verse 18, what is the kingdom of God like?

That's his introduction to his subject. What is the kingdom of God like? Or, to what shall I compare it? That's what he's talking about, the kingdom.

Now, before we get into this, let me ask you something. As a Christian, as a born-again follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, have you ever really given much thought to just what you are a part of in terms of the greater scheme of God?

[14:04] Have you ever really given much thought to that in terms of God's eternal plan? What part you are in that? Not just what you play in it, but what part you fit in that entire eternal scheme of God's redemption?

what part do you play? Have you ever really given much thought to that? Do you have a sense of just how big a deal it is to be one of the redeemed of the Lord?

And listen, you just think about our church, you know, Highland Park Baptist Church, not a large church by most measurements, but have you considered that we are part of something huge, huge, and something that is really big, even bigger than we can imagine.

It's bigger than we know, it's bigger than we're able to see at this point in our lives. It's huge. We are joined to something that God is doing that is huge now, but also one day will be bigger than anything we could ever have imagined.

Now, what am I talking about? I'm talking about the kingdom, the kingdom of God. That's the one word in the passage that describes what I'm talking about here.

[15:24] Now, what kingdom is it? Whose kingdom? Well, it's the kingdom of God. That's what Jesus said in Luke 13, 18. The kingdom of God. Now, when Jesus came to church on this particular day in the synagogue on the Sabbath day, his subject for teaching was the kingdom of God.

And there are three things that we need to know about the kingdom of God, and they're very simple things. First of all, what is it? Second of all, when is it?

And third, where is it right now? Where is the kingdom of God right now? Those are the three things that we need to know about the kingdom. What is it? When is it?

And where is it? So we can turn these into those questions. The kingdom of God, first of all, what is it? It seems clear that it's pretty important. I mean, if you read the gospels, you understand that the kingdom of God, understanding what it is, is a pretty important thing to do.

It must be something that God wants us to know about because, listen, everywhere Jesus traveled during his earthly ministry, he preached and taught the kingdom of God.

[16:37] Everywhere he went, he's talking about that. You see it everywhere in the gospels. Jesus is always talking about it or teaching about it or preaching on it or referring to it. Sometimes we have Jesus preaching the kingdom of heaven.

That was Matthew's favorite terminology, preferred terminology. Sometimes we have Jesus preaching the kingdom of God. That clearly was Luke's preferred terminology.

He used that phrase 32 times in the gospel of Luke and I think another seven times in his second gospel, the Acts. So sometimes it's the kingdom of heaven, sometimes it's the kingdom of God, but these designations are not two different things.

These are synonymous. He's talking about the same thing here just using different terminology. The subject is the same. Sometimes you'll have in the gospels Jesus preaching the gospel of the kingdom.

The gospel of the kingdom. You know the word gospel, euangelion in the Greek. It means good news, right? Good news of the kingdom. That's what Jesus preached everywhere he went.

[17:42] And what is the good news of the kingdom of God? Well, in the first place, it is that it has come. That was the first good news of the kingdom of God. It's here. It has come.

The kingdom is here because the king has come. But second of all, it's good news in that the king has opened his kingdom to sinners like you and me through a new and living way.

That is through the cross. And third of all, I would say that sinners may enter that kingdom through faith in its king, the king of the kingdom. That is the Lord Jesus Christ.

So what is the kingdom then? Well, simply put, it is an eternal kingdom. We know that. It's not a kingdom that rises and then later falls. It's not like many of the kingdoms that have come into being in the history of this planet and then later to be conquered and be replaced by other kingdoms.

This is an eternal kingdom because Jesus said it's the kingdom of God. And God is eternal. His kingdom is eternal. So we can say that very clearly. It's an eternal kingdom.

[18:49] And so the kingdom of God is simply this. It is the eternal realm of those whose king is Jesus. And they are that realm of King Jesus because they have repented of sin.

They have believed and trusted in Jesus Christ and have been forgiven and redeemed and birthed into his kingdom. And that includes every born again believer.

We are all then spirit born subjects of God's kingdom. kingdom. That's what the kingdom is. The second question is this.

The kingdom of God, when is it? When is it? Because you know we might be saying, well, if it's here, where is it? I don't see it. When is this going to happen?

And that's what the people there wanted to know, of course, and that's why Jesus was teaching this lesson on the kingdom of God. Because according to Jesus, the kingdom of God is both now and it is ongoing and it is yet to come.

[20:00] So it's now and yet to come and everything in between. And that leads us then to the first of the two parables that Jesus tells in this passage. And he uses these parables to describe a certain aspect of the kingdom of God.

The first parable is the parable of the mustard seed. A little bitty tiny mustard seed. And so in verse 19 he says, it, that is the kingdom of God, is like.

It's like something. And so Jesus is telling a parable but he's using specifically a simile. A simile. He says, the kingdom of God is like.

So what is the kingdom of God like? Well, Jesus says, it is like a mustard seed. Which a man took and put in his garden. And it grew and became a large tree.

And the birds of the air nested in its branches. So there's the parable. That's what Jesus says. The kingdom of God is just like that. Now, you know, there's been a lot of speculation about some of the various features and elements of this parable.

[ 21 : 13 ] And, you know, Bible scholars and preachers and even lay people like to look at parables and like to pick it apart and try to match every element of the parable to match it up with something else or some religious truth.

And so there's been some debate about that, speculation about that. And so I've read this past week that some put a particular emphasis on this man putting the seed in his garden.

The word put is what we have in the New King James. And it's a word, a Greek word that literally means to cast or to throw. In fact, I think throw comes out in some of the versions of this passage. And it's interesting that the meaning, the general meaning of the word in the Greek means to cast or to throw without caring where it falls.

So, you know, so scholars will look at that word that was used by Jesus and he chose a specific word, particular word, and they want to draw out of that some particular emphasis or some particular meaning.

[ 22 : 18 ] There are also those who want to know the significance of the garden in the parable. You know, that he threw the seed or cast it into his garden, his garden, which would be unusual because mustard plants grow, as we're going to see, into quite a large tree and that's not something you would generally want to put and plant in your garden with all the other garden variety plants because you don't want them to be shaded.

So they look at that and they kind of pick that apart and say, well, there must be some kind of hidden meaning here, some significance to that. And then what about, of course, the birds of the air nesting in the branches?

And, you know, what do these birds represent? We want every element of the parable to represent something else. And so, you know, some have said and speculated that the birds are representative of the Gentiles.

And so the tree is the Jews and the birds that come in are the Gentiles, Gentiles included into the gospel and so forth. Some have come up with that idea. There are others who hold that the birds don't represent believers.

They rather represent unbelievers because they're not part of the tree. And they're unbelievers in mankind that are benefiting from the presence of the kingdom in this world.

[ 23 : 37 ] You know, kind of like an unbelieving husband would enjoy a measure of God's blessing upon his home because his wife is a believer. And maybe even children are believers.

So it's kind of that scenario. And so we just kind of look at the birds and do they represent something. And here's what I think. I think this is just a simple, simple analogy.

It's all this is. A simile. And I don't think Jesus meant to have every element of this parable correspond to some specific truth, some spiritual truth.

And so here's the point. And really it's just very simple. The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed because a mustard seed is the smallest of the garden variety seeds.

But when it is full grown it becomes the largest of garden variety plants. 15 feet in diameter sometimes. Maybe even as much as 20 feet tall.

[ 24 : 34 ] That's quite a large garden plant, isn't it? And so he says the kingdom of God is like a mustard seed. And so the principle is just simply this. It starts very, very small and it becomes very, very big.

And that's the point of the parable. We don't have to go any further than that. The kingdom of God is just like that. It has started very, very, very small.

I mean compared to the other garden variety religions of the day, Christianity was the smallest. In fact so small it was virtually non-existent in comparison.

But like a mustard seed after it is planted the kingdom of God will become very, very, very big. And we know that to be true don't we?

From our vantage point. And so understand that when Jesus said these words, when he spoke these words in the synagogue on that Sabbath day the kingdom was in the mustard seed stage.

[ 25 : 39 ] Very, very small. And this I think explains why Jesus said what he said in this particular passage in the synagogue. Now think about it.

Jesus was always talking about the kingdom of God. Over and over again you see it in the gospel. And everywhere he went he spoke of the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven, the gospel of the kingdom, the kingdom this and the kingdom that.

And the people, I think even his own disciples were saying, at least at the first anyway, they were saying, great, fantastic, that's what we've been looking for. That's what we've been longing for. And so when, Jesus, when, when will the kingdom come? And Jesus is saying, you don't understand. It's here right now.

In fact, you're looking at it. You're looking at it. And they're looking around and they're thinking, what? No. No royal trumpeters.

[ 26 : 43 ] No horses and chariots. No conquering armies. No palace. No crown. No throne. What kind of kingdom is this? It makes sense in regard to their understanding of a kingdom.

No one has ever seen a kingdom like that. That's difficult for us to see it the way they would have seen it then. Because we know what the kingdom has become now.

But we have to look through their eyes and understand that what they saw was not a kingdom. They didn't, they didn't see anything that looked like a kingdom. The only concept they had of a kingdom was one that had a visible, had visible features, had external features.

And all they saw was Jesus of Nazareth, the son of a peasant carpenter from a despised town, Nazareth.

Nothing ever good ever came out of Nazareth was the saying of the day. That's all they could see. There wasn't anything kingly about Jesus when he came.

[ 27 : 47 ] And listen, that's exactly the point. So all they saw was Jesus and all they saw were the twelve apostles and they were uneducated men and fishermen and a tax collector.

And in fact, after Jesus' death and resurrection, the kingdom, if we just go by the account of the resurrection and the visitation of Jesus to his disciples, the kingdom may have only numbered 500 people by the time he was raised from the dead.

What kind of kingdom is that? I like J.C. Ryle. I have his commentary on Luke and he made this comment out of this particular passage and I want to quote it for you.

It's just it really kind of sets it all crystal clear in our minds. He said Christianity is a religion which at first seems so feeble and helpless and powerless that it could not possibly live.

Its first founder was one who was poor in this world and he ended his life by dying the death of a malefactor on the cross. Its first adherents were a little company whose number probably did not exceed a thousand when the Lord Jesus left this world.

[ 29 : 04 ] He at least marked it at a thousand. Its first preachers were a few fishermen and publicans who were most of them unlearned and ignorant men. Its first starting point was a despised corner of the earth called Judea, a petty tributary province of the vast empire of Rome.

Its first doctrine was eminently calculated to call forth the enmity of the natural heart. Christ crucified was to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness.

Its first movements brought down on its friends persecution from all quarters. Pharisees and Sadducees and Jews and Gentiles, ignorant idolaters and self-conceited philosophers all agreed in hating and opposing Christianity.

It was a sect everywhere spoken against. These are no empty assertions. They're simply historical facts that no one can deny.

If ever there was a religion that was a little grain of seed at its beginning, that religion was the gospel. And it was just that. And Jesus is always talking about the kingdom.

[ 30 : 17 ] They're talking, he's talking about the and the Jews, you know, they're looking at that and they're saying this whole idea of Jesus being the king of God's kingdom is ludicrous. It's ridiculous.

He must be an egomaniac. And that's why I think when the Romans crucified him, they mocked him by putting a placard above his head on the cross that read king of the Jews.

It's a mockery. And that's what they thought of this. All right, so, but now, here we are over 2,000 years later and that mustard seed has grown into a large plant, hasn't it?

An incredible plant. In fact, it had a big growth spurt right after the Pentecost, after the resurrection when the Holy Spirit came upon his church and the church grew exponentially by thousands and thousands and thousands and here we are today with a huge mustard plant for the church.

And we say, yeah, the kingdom didn't look like much then, but look at it now. Before it started, there was not a single Christian in the entire world. Not a single Christian.

[ 31 : 30 ] After the resurrection, there were only 500 Christians that we know for certain about from Scripture and now multiplied millions living on the planet today.

And if you count all those who have died in the last 2,000 years, billions. It's grown to billions. And yet, I must quickly add, this is nothing.

What we have today is nothing compared to what the kingdom will look like one day in the future.

And there are many passages in the Bible and the Old Testament that speak to this.

Let me just pick one of them. Psalm 2, the second psalm, begins this way. Why are the nations in an uproar? And the peoples devising a vain thing. The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed.

And this is just a reference to the end time when Jesus returns to this earth and he comes to finally establish his visible kingdom which is not yet been, is not yet visible to even our eyes today.

[ 32 : 39 ] And he will come and it will be King Jesus against all the kings of the world. And Psalm 2 verse 4 says, He who sits in the heavens laughs. The Lord scoffs at them.

Then he will speak to them in his anger and terrify them in his fury saying, But as for me, I have installed my king, that's Jesus, upon Zion, that's his place of reign, which is a reference, I think, to New Jerusalem, my holy mountain.

So this is, I think, a reference to his millennial kingdom. And in verse 8 it says, And I will surely give the nations as your inheritance. All the nations will be under him. You shall break them with a rod of iron and you shall shatter them like earthenware or like clay pottery.

All right, now, listen, that's the kind of king and kingdom the people were looking for when Jesus came the first time. But Jesus says, you don't understand, that's how, that's how, not how it starts, that's how it will one day end.

His kingship was obscured. His kingdom was hidden like a mustard seed in the ground. But one day it will come into full view and it will fill the whole earth like a mustard seed plant filling the whole garden.

[ 34 : 04 ] And King Jesus will sit upon his throne and his bride, the church, will reign with him. The kingdom of God. You see, what is it? It is the realm of the redeemed of the Lord.

And Jesus is the sovereign king of kings. The kingdom of God, when is it? It's now. It's right now. And it is yet to come. Yet to come.

When, as it says in Revelation 12, 10, the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ have come. And that is in the future.

Maybe the near future. Who knows? All right, so here's a third and final question. The kingdom of God, where is it? In terms of right now.

Where is the kingdom of God right now? Well, take your hand. Take your hand. Put it right on your heart. If you are a born-again believer, redeemed of the Lord, the kingdom of God resides right there.

[ 35 : 15 ] Right there in your heart and in your life. Remember, the kingdom of God is the, by definition, is the realm of Christ over which he rules.

The faithful, the believing, the redeemed, the saved, whatever term you want to use, are that realm. That realm.

And Christ today reigns and rules in the hearts and lives of his born-again children in every one of us.

You could easily point to your eyes and say the kingdom is ruling there, or should be. Your ears, your mouth, your feet, your hands.

There is where the kingdom of God reigns in what I put my eyes on, in what I speak, in what I allow my ears to hear, in my mind to think, in my heart to feel, in my feet to take me, in my hands to do work.

[ 36 : 20 ] There is where the kingdom of our Lord Jesus reigns today. And this too reveals the progress of the gospel. And that leads us to the final parable that Jesus tells here in verse 20.

To what shall I like in the kingdom of God? It is like leaven or fermented dough which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, which by the way is a whole lot of dough, till it is all leavened. So again, the simile is the same. Something very, very small becomes very, very big. And so a small lump of leavened or fermented dough transforms a large batch of dough into leavened bread. But now, this time the analogy is a little bit different. A little bit different. This time it's talking about something small permeating the large, the whole.

And so whereas the mustard seed that becomes a large tree is analogous to the progress of the gospel on this earth, the leaven, I believe, is analogous to the progress of the gospel in the heart of the believer, the heart and life of the believer.

[ 37 : 42 ] And so the work of grace, then, through the gospel, begins very small in the heart of the sinner. perhaps it's just a single sentence of a sermon heard in church or on the radio or seen on the internet.

Just a single thing that that person hears that is a little leaven that is planted in the heart and life. Perhaps it's a single verse of scripture that's shared by a faithful Christian.

Maybe it's a family member or maybe it is a friend or maybe even a complete stranger. Or perhaps it's a Bible lesson taught in a children's Sunday school class or vacation Bible school or a WANA and it's just kind of planted, it's placed in the life.

Perhaps it's a small act of kindness received from a believer in the name of Jesus or a Christian testimony that is heard or a Christian godly example that is observed.

And I could go on. Just small little things that God uses to bring to that sinner and to place in that sinner's mind and heart. And it's like the mixture of leaven in a lump of dough.

[ 39 : 03 ] It may begin so small that it is barely perceptible, barely noticed. A word here, a word there, a bit of scripture, a bit of the gospel, a gospel truth.

But eventually it begins to grow and permeate the mind and the heart and grace does its work in that person's life.

And it's followed then by continued growth of the leaven that has been placed in the heart and life of that person, that believer.

A desire to read the Bible begins to grow inside and an increased interest in spiritual things and perhaps a growing distaste for sinful habits and sinful behavior and maybe a growing desire for godly things and service toward the Lord.

And these things are beginning to grow and it's the kingdom of God being established in the heart of the believer. And once it begins, it never stops.

[ 40 : 08 ] It doesn't stop. See, just like the leaven that is once introduced into the dough and begins to leaven the whole lump, there's no way again to separate that leaven from it.

It permeates the whole. It cannot be separated. It cannot be taken away. It will continue to do its work and it will continue until it leavens the entire lump.

And so little by little the reign of Christ in your heart will control your conscience and your affections, your loves, your desires, your longings, your thinking, the way you think, your will.

And many other things. Zechariah 4.10 tells us not to despise the day of small things. And so we must crawl before we can walk and walk before we can run and run before we can mount up on eagle's wings and fly.

Philippians 1.6 says, He who has begun a good work in you will. Will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.

[ 41 : 12 ] Now all of that really as I close leads to one question that each one of us should ask. And the question is simply this.

Do I see in my own life any progress of the gospel? Can I see, do I see in me that my affections toward Christ are growing?

My desire for His word is increasing. My disgust and distaste toward sin is becoming more and more prevalent in me, is growing in me.

Do I see the progress of the gospel in my own heart and in my own life? Do you see that?

And if you do not then you must ask the question why not? Why not? Is it because perhaps you've never truly believed?

[ 42 : 15 ] Is it perhaps that you've never truly repented of your sin? Trusted Christ? Is it perhaps that you are not truly born again? if you can look at your life and see that there is no leavening of the whole life because of the progress of the gospel in my heart and in my life affecting everything about me.

If you don't see that then you must know why. And it could be because you need Jesus and you need salvation in Him. Thank you.