

The growing adventure

Mark 4.26-34

Jesus tells two parables. He explains how seed is planted and then grows silently and unseen in the ground until it has grown enough to be harvested. His second story is about the tiny mustard seed and how although it is so small, it grows into a big tree.

Now read **Mark 4.26-34** see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

Jesus does not explain his parables. He leaves it to the listener to take their own meaning from them. In these parables, he is teaching about how something apparently insignificant can grow and be transformed.



Create a card for someone who might be feeling low. Inside write, 'No matter how small you feel, God has a plan for you', and stick a packet of seeds on the inside of the card.

WATCH



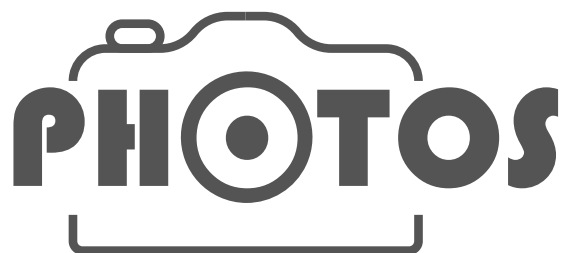
Watch *One Cambodian Family Please for my Pleasure*, a 13-minute film based on the true story of Helena, who escaped persecution in communist Czechoslovakia to be resettled in North Dakota. The film is about her need, as a refugee who made it out of her bad situation, to help others in a similar position.

- 1 <https://movingworlds.info/one-cambodian-family>
- 2 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eV0dsc10_-g

This week is Refugee Week and Helena's story shows how the actions of one person can make a huge difference. Like the mustard seed in the Bible passage, this is only small but eventually makes a large impact.

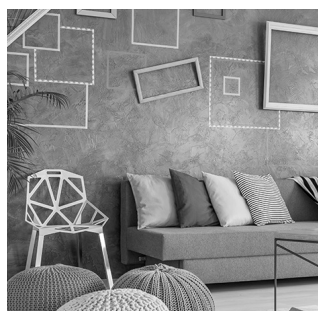


Be still and look at a picture of a mustard tree.
<https://brainsnorts.files.wordpress.com/2011/11/mustard.jpg>
 What does it say to you about God? What does it say to you about you?



Look at pictures of yourself and other members of your family when you were babies or young children. Talk/think about what you could do when you were the age you were in the photos. What could you do then? How does that compare with what you can do now? How did the change come about? What has helped you to grow? What helps us to grow spiritually?

OBJECTS



What objects are there in your home which help you to flourish?

Find the smallest object that you can locate in your home.

What is it? What is its purpose? Why does it need to be the size it is? What does it feel like to hold?

Now look for the biggest object you can find. Can you pick it up? Is it heavy? What is it for? Why does it need to be the size it is?

Choose a version of the passage to read. The first is the ROOTS version for children, the second is the NRSV text which may be suitable for older children, young people and adults.

Jesus told his disciples a parable. He said, 'The kingdom of God is like tiny seeds scattered on the ground. They sprout and grow: slowly and silently, through the days and through the nights, hidden from view. It doesn't matter whether the farmer, who planted them, is asleep or awake. They grow, on their own, nourished by the earth: first the root, then the stalk, then the bud and finally the full head of grain. The farmer does not know how the seeds grow into grain. But as soon as his crop is ready, he uses his scythe to cut and harvest the grain.'

He told them another parable to explain God's kingdom. 'It is like a tiny, tiny mustard seed. A mustard seed is one of the smallest seeds. But when it takes root, and forces its way up through the soil, it grows into one of the largest trees, with branches so wide that birds of all sizes can build their nests in it.'



Jesus used many parables or stories to teach the people. Those who heard them often didn't understand them, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

Mark 4.26-34

Did you know?

- To harvest: to gather in ripe crops ready to eat or use.
- Jesus was a great storyteller who used parables – stories to help people learn more about God, explaining things that are sometimes hard to understand, using things we see around us.

Mark 4.26-34 (NRSV)

Jesus also said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come."

He also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard

seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.