

Sermon 13.6.21

Trinity 2

By Joy Dipple

1 Samuel 15:34- 16:13

Mark 4:26-34

Many many years ago, when I was about 26, I was incredibly skinny. Well, since then I have doubled in size and reduced in height, becoming a bit more spherical.

I think God likes well rounded people, but more in a spiritual sense. The passages today are about spiritual growth – the growth of God’s kingdom, not physical growth. God doesn’t really look at our physical appearance, and I’m rather pleased about that! Samuel, with God’s guidance, had to choose one of Jesse’s sons to be the next anointed king of Israel, and God told him that He looked at the heart, not the outward appearance.

David, as a shepherd, already knew how to care for those he was in charge of, and would grow to become a shepherd king of Israel – a precursor to our Lord’s own role as shepherd and king of God’s kingdom. Saul’s role as king would diminish. He had failed in his obedience to God, and would ultimately be taken over by a spirit of jealousy. David on the other hand would grow into his role. He wouldn’t be perfect (none of us are) – but he had a heart for God, and he also had a repentant heart – the ability to acknowledge his guilt when it was pointed out to him, and his need for forgiveness – to be put right again before God.

Perhaps when you look back you can see how your own faith has grown over the years. When I look back I can see how I have changed, and I cringe somewhat as I remember some things from the past. Of course I still cringe about things I do wrong these days too, and I’m sure all of us feel the same at times, and can all say thank God for His loving mercy. We are all a work in progress.

There is the kingdom growth of the individual as we think of how David was anointed to be a future king, and would grow into that role; but of course there is also the kingdom growth that Jesus speaks of in the two parables we have heard today, and I want these parables to be a great encouragement to you, because they certainly speak of God’s unstoppable growth of His kingdom, even if all around us looks dismal and pessimistic. Indeed when we take our eyes off God and look at our own culture and that of other nations too, it can be quite depressing.

Jesus came and preached the coming of God's kingdom. The seeds of his words would take root, and others too would proclaim the same Gospel message. Despite Christ's crucifixion, and the scattering of his disciples, the Resurrection would happen, and the Holy Spirit would come.

As we humans go about our work each day, and take our rest at night, God's kingdom continues to grow until it is ripe for the harvest. It is impossible for it to be defeated, as the victory has already been won through Christ. The farmer sowed the seed, Christ sowed the seed, and we Christians sow the seed. As Christians we don't always know what seeds of the Gospel we may have sown, but grow they will.

Then there is the parable of the mustard seed. God's kingdom would grow – from the smallest of seeds, to become a large tree with branches big enough for the birds to perch on and seek shade. God's kingdom would be for people of all nations, a place of refuge and protection.

David probably felt inadequate for his future role. Perhaps we feel inadequate too as Christians, and don't feel that we are really having any influence on the world around us, but these parables say otherwise.

We ourselves perhaps can't see it, but sometimes non-Christians detect a joyfulness and peace within followers of Christ which is attractive, and I heard a comment to that effect only recently. We care for our world but don't have to be absorbed by it, and people see the difference.

Sometimes God gives us the opportunities to speak of Him, but sometimes it is holy lives well lived that speak out to others. We don't of course always get it right, and that is what repentance is for, but God can, and does, speak to the world through us.

So be encouraged. If our hearts are right with God, then like David, we too are anointed for service in God's kingdom, and that kingdom will continue to grow.