

Scripture **“The Mustard Seed Parable”** March 22nd 2026 Bob Metcalf

TEXT: Mt 13:31-32 *“Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, ³² which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.”*

The setting of the Parable: We see Jesus sitting in a boat and the multitude is standing on the seashore. In Luke we see Him teaching this same parable in a synagogue on the Sabbath, so it is obviously evident that Jesus repeated His teachings on various occasions in different settings.

The Moral of the Parable: The central truth we see here is:

The Kingdom of Heaven in its present state has a small beginning but an unnatural growth, which attracts all sorts of birds into its branches.

With this Mustard Seed Parable we see the “external development of the Kingdom”
While with other parables we see “internal development of the Kingdom”

1 Cor 2:13 *“These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”*

Mt 13:10-13 *“And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?” ¹¹ He answered and said to them, “Because it has been **given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven**, but to them it has not been given. ¹² For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. ¹³ Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.”*

--The casual hearer or curious spectator, why don’t these people see or hear or perceive?

Plainly, because they don’t want to!

--True Disciples are open and hungry for the truth, the Word of God,

--Those that have a prepared heart to be good ground so that we can bear fruit.

Six Symbols of this Parable

1. Mustard Seed: the seed is known for its minuteness.

The mustards reproduce with extraordinary rapidity.

“They can attain a height of ten or twelve feet, and have branches which attract passing birds”

Hasting Bible Dictionary

-The Seed seen here is the **Kingdom of Heaven in its present manifestation**

-We see in the N.T. that Jesus used the mustard seed symbol on occasion.

-He described the mustard seed as likened to faith.

-It’s the smallest of all garden seeds.

-It is the purest of all garden seeds, but it has the potential within itself to grow into a tree.

- The Kingdom of heaven was planted in seed form in the gospels under the Ministry of Christ and His Apostles, the mustard seed represents the Kingdom of Heaven in seed form.
- We see unnatural growth and this shows us the EXTERNAL development of the Kingdom.

2. The Man, The Sower: To be consistent with the previous parables, this points once again to the Son of Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself.

3. The Field: This word is used 7 different times in this chapter.

It is His field. The earth, Luke calls it His garden, The field here is the World.

Ps 24:1 *“The earth is the LORD’s, and all its fullness,
The world and those who dwell therein.”*

4. Became a Tree: Luke says it became a “Large Tree” It became a great Kingdom, a large kingdom.

Now a tree in Scripture is likened to either one of two things. A People_or a Kingdom depending upon the context.

Within the context here we see it speaks of Kingdom, it is symbolic of the Kingdom of God/Heaven. And Jesus actually tells us this.

Daniel 4:10-12 *“These were the visions of my head while on my bed: I was looking, and behold, A tree in the midst of the earth, And its height was great. ¹¹ The tree grew and became strong; Its height reached to the heavens, And it could be seen to the ends of all the earth. ¹² Its leaves were lovely, its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The **beasts** of the field found shade under it, The **birds** of the heavens dwelt in its branches, And all flesh was fed from it.*

5. The Birds: Jesus describes the seed that fell by the wayside and “**the birds of the air** devoured the seed.

(Luke 8:5) Mt 13:19 *“the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown”*

In this passage in Daniel 4, The birds came and lodged in the branches of these “world kingdoms”

Naturally and Spiritually Birds are attracted to these tree kingdoms and their branches.

Ez 17:22-24 *“ Thus says the Lord GOD: “I will take also one of the highest branches of the high cedar and set it out. I will crop off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one, and will plant it on a high and prominent mountain. ²³ On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it; and it will bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a majestic cedar. Under it will dwell **birds of every sort**; in the shadow of its branches they will dwell.*

The description here is a Kingdom symbolized by a tree and birds dwelling in it!

Ez 31:6 *All **the birds of the heavens** made their nests in its boughs: Under its branches all the beasts of the field brought forth their young; And in its shadow all great nations made their home."*

- The birds** came and enjoyed the seeds of the mustard tree and make their nest in its branches.
- Who are these birds? Again the Bible answers this for us.
- Lev 11** the Lord defined and gave distinction which birds of the air were clean and unclean and an abomination to Him.

Clean birds that could be eaten are; doves, quail, and pigeons. These birds feed on seed. The clean birds, they represent true believers, **true converts in the Kingdom of God.**

Clean birds are those who feed on seed or God's Word.

It speaks of those who have come into the church and have been regenerated by the spirit of God. **Titus 3:5b** *"He saved us, through the washing of **regeneration** and renewing of the Holy Spirit,"*

Unclean birds which could not be eaten are described in Leviticus. Vultures, owls, eagles and other meat eating birds. These feed on seed and flesh.

- These 'birds' are your unregenerate, that have never become born again. These are unregenerate *"church members*
- These unclean birds *also* speak evil persons and unclean spirits or demonic spirits.

Rev 18:1-2 *"After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. ² And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!"*

Gen 15:11 *"And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.*

- What we see here a picture of evil spirits, and this could even be evil persons directed and under the influence of evil spirits coming in when a **God thing was happening!**
- When God is moving in your personal life and it just seems like it could not get better, I'm growing, then some birds will come in on some branches of your extended life.

This can happen in a Christian owned business a family, or even a church When things are growing quickly. The bad birds can come to its branch's.

5. The Birds: Again, consistency of interpretation is needed here.

We see the *"birds of the air"*

Jesus describes the seed that fell by the wayside and the birds of the air devoured the seed. **(Luke 8:5) & Mt 13:19** *"the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown"*

It was **Abrams responsibility** to not let them hang around and destroy and cause mayhem or destroy **what God was doing.**

It's the **head of the household**; it is their responsibility to do the same!

It's the **business owners** responsibility to get rid of the birds!
It's the **pastor's and his leaders** responsibility to do the same!

John 10:10 *"The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy."*

6. The Branches: The Birds of the air lodged in the branches. They made their nest there.
The **unclean birds** would not only feed on the seeds of the mustard tree, **they would also make their nesting for their young to be hatched there as well.**

"The Kingdom of God is manifested in the church from its small beginnings in the Gospels and the book of Acts"

*All sorts of birds, (people) are making their nests in these branches.
Both Clean, and unclean, regenerate and unregenerate.*

All feeding on the seed of teaching and preaching! *They are sitting in church eating the same the same seed (WORD).*

-The good birds or the regenerate are those who have allowed Christ by invitation and the Holy Spirit of regeneration is working in their life. They are getting nourished by the Seed/Word.
-Jesus said in **John 15** *"He was the **Vine tree** and the believers were the branches who drew their life from Him and He was their source of fruitfulness"*

Romans 11:19-21 *"You will say then, "**Branches** were broken off that I might be grafted in."²⁰ Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. ²¹ For if God did not spare **the natural branches**, He may not spare you either." (**spiritual branches**)*

Many denominations, these speak of "**branch churches**"
*The various denominations in the 'church universal' are represented in these "**branches**"*

All may be likened to "**the branches**" of the mustard tree!

In these Branches as well It is **also possible to see the various cults** that use the name "Christian" to draw people into their "branch churches"

- Cults will claim that additional writings (besides the Bible) are inspired by God
- Cults will claim that Jesus Christ is not fully God
- They can make long prayers and appear pious
- They are tireless workers
- They were champions of Scripture, memorizing much of the Word
- They fasted twice a week, and were very strict in their beliefs
- They were fundamental and believed in the miraculous
- They at times prophesied and even cast out demons....
- They believed in the coming of Messiah

--They were religious without Christ!

Mt 7:21-23“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘**I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!**’

Kingdom righteousness is the righteousness of the spirit, of faith, and Christ, Who is our Righteousness!!

There are also many people in the “**BRANCHES**” that are religious but without Christ!

SUMMARY

The kingdom of God has grown from its small beginning as a seed, and has spread around the world. Out of every kindred, tongue, tribe, and nation, people are nesting in the tree, good and bad, genuine and counterfeit.

Over the centuries of church history, the church has become a great tree. The growth has been unnatural, abnormal, and supernatural.

The birds of all kinds have flocked into her denominational branches, bringing their defilements and corrupting philosophies, and feeding on the seed that the mustard tree produces.

In this end-time generation we see the condition of the Kingdom/Church. This is the mystery of the parable of the mustard seed