

# Sermon Title: The Subversive Nature of the Kingdom

Date: 06-29-2025

## Pray and Read the Text together

- **Sermon Text:** Matthew 13:31-33

## Some Possible Discussion Questions

1. What comes to mind when you think about the term “subversive.” Is this a good thing or a bad thing?
2. How long are you willing to work at something before you need to see results? Does it need to be immediate? Longer? A lifetime? How has our current culture and technology impacted our expectations around results timing?
3. Is it better to push forward change from the outside in or the inside out? Why?
4. In what ways is the Kingdom of our God and Christ subversive to the culture around us?

## Passage Context

- This is #4 in our Summer series walking through the parables. This specific parable Jesus told in the midst of a series of parables. Indeed, this parable was given in between the telling and the interpretation of last week’s parable.

## Sermon Introduction

- The revelatory truths made known in and through the parables confronts hearts, challenges understanding, and calls many to believe in the King and his kingdom.
- This week we are confronted with the subversive nature of the kingdom. Subversive here meaning something that confronts, critiques, and corrects expectations.
- The kingdom subverts cultural and personal expectations by growing from small beginnings and from the inside out.

## Sermon Outline

### A Subversive Kingdom

- From small to large: The Mustard Seed
  - In our series so far, we’ve had seeds sown, weeds sown, and now a mustard seed sown – the “smallest of all seeds.”
  - Unlike popular expectations of the time, the kingdom did not come with extravagance or political power, but with humility, and with refuge for many. Read as comparison Ez 17:22-24.
  - The kingdom that began with 12 simple men in the outskirts of Jerusalem, would grow and expand to reach the corners of the world, drawing under the haven of its branches a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages (Revelation 7:9).
- From inside to out: The Leaven
  - Some seek, and some have sought, to make Christianity enforced from the outside, in. But that is not how the kingdom works.
  - Instead, the kingdom grows like leaven, which you can’t see work immediately in breads, but over time the expansion can be seen, even though it can sometimes take weeks, months, years, and even decades to see the fruit of ministry labor, but our call is to be faithful.

## A Subversive People

- We are called, as Kingdom people, to live in subversive (unexpected) ways to our culture.
- Subversive **blessing** (Acts 20:35, Matt 5:5), subversive **demeanor** (Matt 23:12, James 4:6), subversive **service** (Matt 23:11, Phil. 2:4), subversive **forgiveness** (Matt 18:21-22), subversive **love** (Matt 5:44, 46), subversive **hope** (John 11:25-26, Matt 16:25), subversive **trials** (James 1:2, Matt 5:10-11), subversive **strength** (2 Co 12:8-9, 1 Co 1:27-29).
- As kingdom people our lives are radically distinct from the world. Just as much as darkness is distinct from light. This is why the Christian life is dependent on the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit to work in us the power needed to faithfully live in light of his kingdom and not the world.
- Our flesh wants to walk the easy path, but kingdom people, in faith, empowered by the Spirit, are called to walk the arduous path of subversion. We are to not be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewal of our minds (Romans 12:2).

## A Subversive King

- The kingdom people's aspiration is her King. In all that we do we seek to imitate, reflect, and conform our whole self to Jesus, our Lord and Savior.
- As our King, Jesus lived and proclaimed the perfect and ultimate subversive life and gospel.
- Jesus is: **the eternal Son** of God who took on flesh. **The Lord of armies** who was mocked by soldiers. **The judge of all** who was falsely accused. **The one who saved many** but did not spare himself. **The one who offers eternal waters** but who himself thirsted. **The king of glory** who took the form of a servant. **The sinless one** who bore our sins. **Life himself** who died and was buried. **The righteous one** who called the sinner. **The one who loved us** when we were his enemies.

## Sermon Conclusion

- If we were writing the story we would have long done away with rebels, sinners, the faithless, the weak, and betrayers.
- The cross is the apex of subversion. Sin and death were subverted, the works of Satan were subverted, and for those who come to Christ their sinful lives are subverted. The King's gracious death on the cross confronts, challenges, critiques, and corrects all expectations.
- Like a mustard seed that grows to be the biggest tree or like leaven that permeates the whole lump, the work of Christ is unexpected, unforeseen, and unmerited.

## [#Sermon Link](#)

## Upcoming Events:

- **Every Sunday** – Prayer groups and youth group done through the summer until the fall
- **Back to School Drive** - June and July
- **VBA** – July 14-18 (at Elmwood)
- **Summer Palooza** – July 20 at Natick campus
- **Meal Train sign-ups**
- **Please update your groups info in planning center**

**Next Sunday's text:** Matthew 13:44 - 46; **Theme:** The Hidden Treasure / The Pearl of Great Value