

"Mustard and Yeast" *by Rev. John C. Tittle*

Scripture Reading: Luke 13: 18-21 NRSV

¹⁸ He said therefore, "What is the kingdom of God like? And to what should I compare it? ¹⁹ It is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in the garden; it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches." ²⁰ And again he said, "To what should I compare the kingdom of God? ²¹ It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

Discussion Questions:

1. What is your favorite condiment? Do you like ketchup or mustard better?
2. What is your favorite kind of bread?
3. What do you think Jesus is saying through these two short parables or similitudes?
4. Both of these analogies deal with change and transformation. What is the purpose of the change that takes place in the mustard seed? What is the purpose of the change that the yeast brings about?
5. The change and transformation that happens in Jesus' kingdom nourishes and protects many. So, how does Jesus' rule and reign do that in our lives, in the church, and in the world?
6. Growth can't take place without change. Why is change so scary? What change did the seed need to go through in the ground? What change happened to the bread because of the yeast and oven? How are our lives like both things?
7. Nothing is too small, mundane, or significant for Jesus to work through. Large empires were often likened to large cedar trees that birds nested in. Jesus chose instead a mustard plant to describe what his kingdom was like—sheltering and feeding birds. Why did he choose the mustard plant instead of a more majestic cedar tree?
8. Just a pinch of yeast was enough to make 50 lbs. of flour rise and become bread to feed 150 people. What is Jesus saying about the power of yeast?