



June 17, 2018 Mk. 4: 26-34 & Ezek. 17:22-24

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#### SETTING THE SCENE:

A parable challenges us to growth. If we are too far from understanding it, it leaves us dismissing it in some way or other. If we are getting close to letting its truth in, we find it nagging us until we open ourselves to its meaning. If however, we are ready, it zeroes in straight to the heart and we “know that we know”. But all the time, the parable protects our freedom. We respond according to our ability to hear. Today’s text teaches that just the tiniest speck of faith, provides God with all that is needed for abundant results. This tiny seed contains within it all it needs for God’s purpose. How is your shrub doing?

#### Mk. 4:26-34

26 He also said, “The **kingdom of God** is as if someone would scatter seed on the **ground**, 27 and would **sleep** and **rise** night and day, and the **seed** would **sprout** and **grow**, he does not know how. 28 The **earth produces** of itself, first the **stalk**, then the **head**, then the **full grain** in the **head**. 29 but when the **grain** is **ripe**, at once he goes in with his **sickle**, because the **harvest** has come.” 30 He also

said, With what can we **compare** the **kingdom of God**, or what **parable** will we use for it? 31 It is like a **mustard seed**, which, when **sown** upon the **ground**, is the **smallest** of all the **seeds** on earth; 32 yet when it is **sown** it **grows** up and become the **greatest** of all **shrubs**, and puts forth large **branches**, so that the **birds** of the air can make **nests** in its **shade**.” 33 With many such **parables** he spoke the word to them, as they were **able** to hear it; 34 he did not speak to them except in **parables**, but he **explained** everything in private to his disciples.

**DISCUSSION QUESTION:** What kinds of birds are finding shelter and shade in your branches of faith these days?

**PRAYER:** Lord, from the tiniest speck of faith, you bring forth a harvest of plenty. I thank you now for all those people whose ‘mustard seeds’ of faith have witnessed to me of You. Many, maybe all of them, didn’t even know they were scattering seeds of faith as they went about their lives. Yet your Spirit blew them into my path and now I have the faith too. Help me as I sleep and rise up day after day to be a ‘mustard seed’ for others as well. Amen.