

Jesus IOI

“Grace Thoughts”



A short devotional to help get you excited about Jesus!

“The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three pecks of flour until it was all leavened.” –Matthew 13:33

Recently, I had to make some radical changes in my garden. When we moved to this house four years ago, we had chosen some plants for the backyard, along with some rose bushes. Four years later, two of those plants had grown so much that they had completely taken over one side of the garden. I had to hire a professional to extirpate the two plants with their intricate root system, which was almost impossible to remove. This is the type of visualization that Jesus chose in order to explain the surprising expansion of the kingdom of heaven on earth.

In Matthew 13, Jesus told two parables that contrast the undetectable beginnings of the kingdom of heaven and the astonishing growth that no one can disregard. Both portray an almost imperceptible start. The first parable is about the mustard seed: “The kingdom of heaven *is like* a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field” (Matthew 13:31). The mustard seed was the smallest known seed at the time, attested to in extra-biblical sources, and it was used as a symbol of comparatively tiny dimension (see Matthew 17:20 in regards to faith). The kingdom of heaven had begun, but not in the way it was expected. Yet it was to grow larger than anyone could have thought: “But when it is full grown, it is larger than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches” (Matthew 13:32, see Daniel 4:21). The second parable is about a woman who “hides” leaven in a dough “until it was *all* leavened” (Matthew 13:33). The leaven is *incognito*, but Jesus assures us that its influence becomes undeniable. The same is true with the Jesus movement and its humble beginnings, which eventually became a world-wide phenomenon with eternal consequences. We all have family and friends that we would like to see come to the Lord. These two parables are very encouraging because they remind us that we shouldn’t ever underestimate the kingdom’s growth in a human heart. God works behind the scenes. Give time for the leaven of the gospel to do its work.