



Luke 13:18-19

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

What contrast do we see between the way the crowd responded to Jesus?

Luke 13:17

The crowds were elated by the emancipation of the healing of the woman who for 18 years had had a sickness caused by a spirit.

Luke 13:34

The crowds were angry with Jesus so that they called on the governors to kill Jesus the Prophet.

Overexcited!

Problem of disappointment:

Things were not going to start with an easy and great beginning.

Discouraged

Problem of discouragement: They could assume that the present situation (the slow beginning) would characterize the kingdom's future.

*** The Parable of the Mustard Seed** {Luke 13:18-19}

Jesus used the parable of the mustard seed to point out at least two teachings to counteract the excitement growing in the crowds:

1) Start Small **Don't be over-optimistic!**

From the "Therefore" of verse 18, Jesus was trying to remind them that the kingdom would begin small rather than having the dramatic start the crowd might have anticipated after Jesus' great miracle in the synagogue.

2) Grow Big **Don't be discouraged!**

He was also trying to encourage them to have the right long term perspective. The growth would come, but it would take time. The birds referred to the big size of the tree compared to its tiny start. Ironically, birds like to eat seeds. Mustard seeds were even used for bird seed.

Portraying the amazing growth of God's kingdom, starting very small but becoming very great.

"It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and threw into his own garden; and it grew and became a tree; and the birds of the air nested in its branches." (Luke 13:19)



Why does the kingdom of God have such a small start if the Son of God started it with miracles and powerful teaching? How could we dare think that it would ever grow larger?

Some suggest that the mustard tree never becomes a tree, and that the parable indicates something abnormal with its growth. But in fact the mustard plant does resemble a tree towering over the other garden plants.

"The mustard of the Bible, Mat. 13:31, 32 was probably black mustard, which grows to heights of 3.7 m/12 ft in Israel." [Grolier Encyclopedia]