

## Mysterious Growth

*Mark 4:26-34*

Jesus also said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed...” (Mark 4:30-31a).

Jesus’ parables described the mystery of God’s kingdom in ways that challenged his disciples’ cherished beliefs and assumptions.

Jesus tells the parable of the mustard seed. According to one biblical scholar, “The point is ... that [the mustard seed plant] tends to take over where it is not wanted, that it tends to get out of control, and that it tends to attract birds within cultivated areas where they are not particularly desired.” Mustard seed plants are dangerous in gardens and deadly in grain fields.<sup>1</sup>

What if the kingdom of God is *more like the overgrown garden* than a worked-over, man-made showcase garden? What if the kingdom of God is like an overgrown garden where wheat and weeds coexist and grow in ways that human beings cannot control?

This parable may show us another way to “grow a church.” This new way focuses less on working so hard to control outcomes regarding budgets and bodies. Instead, it focuses more on spreading the seed of God’s word and allowing God to work mysteriously in people’s lives.

How might you allow God to scatter the seed of God’s kingdom within you? How might you allow the mystery of God’s wild and uncontrollable kingdom grow within you and give you a new vision for your life, for this church, for this community?

---

<sup>1</sup> Dominic Crossan, “A Closer Look at the Mustard Seed,” <http://www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/Christianity/2000/07/A-Closer-Look-At-The-Mustard-Seed.aspx>.