

Dandelions & Deckchairs: Questions for Reflection and Discussion

Prepared by Dan Spragg

Reading - Mark 4:26-32

The Parable of the Growing Seed

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."

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

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 becomes the greatest of all shrubs and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

Questions to Reflect and Discuss

- Dan's reflection suggests that the Kingdom of God will grow despite us... in spite of us perhaps, and that the growth of God's Kingdom does not depend on us! How does this idea challenge or affirm your understanding of your role in faith and church?
- The temptation of busyness is discussed, noting that we often use it as a badge of honour or an excuse, despite feeling frazzled and spent. In what ways do you see this temptation appearing in your own life or within your church community, and what might be the underlying reasons for glorifying busyness?
- The reflection proposes flipping the saying "Don't just sit there, do something" to "Don't just do something, sit there!". While not a literal invitation to do nothing, what does it mean to 'move intentionally, to move slowly and more spaciouly in our lives' in a practical sense?
- Dan concludes by asking, "What can we do to take notice and join in with what is already planted and growing?". How might embracing stillness, silence, and solitude - practices from our long and rich tradition within Christianity - help you to better notice and join in with God's work rather than feeling the need to make it happen?

A Prayer

Fill us with your holy love, O Lord,
and open the treasures of your wisdom to us.
You alone know all that we desire.
So perfect what you have begun in us,
and answer the prayers you instill in us
through the stirring of your Holy Spirit.
Even as we seek your face,
turn to us and show us your glory.
Then our longing will be satisfied,
and our peace will be complete. Amen.

Based on a prayer of Augustine of Hippo (354–430)