

## First Southern Wednesday Bible Study - February 2, 2022

### Three Pictures of the “Kingdom of God” - Luke 13:17-35

#### Introduction

1. Three Images
  - A. **Mustard Seed**
  - B. **Leaven**
  - C. **Narrow Gate** (verses 24ff)
    - Recall also the comparable images of light and salt - small things with great influence
    - what about “water” and “bread”
2. All Three
  - Small... to Large comparison
  - Influence
3. First Two -
  - Growth - from small to large
  - Comparison of good to evil
4. Verse 17 - compares two groups of people
  - Adversaries - ashamed
  - The people - rejoiced

#### I. Mustard Seed - (verses 18-19)

1. Small to large (Matthew 13:32 and Mk. 4:31 say it is the smallest of seeds)
  - A. Seed to tree
  - B. The tree is so large that even a flock of birds can rest there - up to ten feet
  - C. \*Other interpretations of the “birds”
    - a symbol of evil in the Bible... so does this mean that the church will get so large that evil will “perch” among her branches?
    - a symbol of the nations... so, inevitably, the entire world will come.

A regular symbol of a mighty empire in the Ancient east was a mighty tree

  - subject nations would find shelter there
- D. William Barclay says it means:
  - 1) There is room for a wide variety of beliefs in the kingdom. No man or church has a monopoly on truth.
  - 2) There is room for a wide variety of experiences. We do infinite harm by standardizing Christian experience.
  - 3) There is room for a wide variety of ways of worship.
  - 4) There is room for all kinds of people - distinctions of rich/ poor, small/ great have no place in the church.
  - 5) There is room for all nations.
2. Inevitable growth
3. **Segue** - the opposition of Jesus’ “adversaries” in verse 17 does not mean the kingdom will fail

#### II. Leaven (verses 20-21)

1. Leaven is usually a symbol of evil in the Bible: what is it here?

- A. Symbol of evil - this means - just like good grows so does evil
  - yeast was seen by the Jews as evil, -after all it is, at base, rot
- B. Symbol of good - means that it is just like the Mustard Seed, it grows quietly and influences the whole of life/ society (the lump)
- C. Rea - I believe this is a symbol of the good of the gospel... after all Jesus said the Kingdom of God is like... leaven
- 2. Inside out\*
  - leaven works from the inside. Apply this way - we never change men from the outside... Jesus taught us to change them from the inside.
- 3. But the gospel comes from the outside... -but, once it gets inside. Such a perfect image!
- 4. KOG is:
  - A. Quiet
  - B. Unseen
  - C. It is growing
    - moving and alive
  - both leaven and seeds move and push... the Kingdom of God fills a man... at once with peace and discontent, which will not rest until the evils of earth are swept away
  - D. Irresistible - powerful
    - like a root that pushes up a sidewalk
  - E. From the inside out
    - seed, in the dirt
    - leaven, in the dough
- 5. Wholesome change -Seed is outward change/ Leaven is inward change
- 6. Applications:**
  - A. For them:
    - small number of disciples...will become large
    - don't be intimidated by your adversaries...(verse 17) - they cannot stop the forward movement of the kingdom
  - B. One man on a board, may change the board
    - for good, for bad
    - You may be the only professing Christian where you work
  - C. You may never change men from the outside
    - new houses, new conditions, better material things change only the surface
    - the difference between a policeman and the church
  - D. It is the job of Christianity to make new persons
    - once new persons are created a new world will follow
    - this is the reason the church is the most important institution in the world... it is where new men are produced

### **III. The Gate - (verses 23-35)**

- 1. Begins with a Question - "are there few saved" (23)
  - A. In our day everyone is going to heaven
  - Hollywood?

- TV shows
- even the most unspiritual person
- beyond me... all life headed to hell then wind up in heaven?

B. Universalism

- Christ died for all"
- by grace - nothing you can do, so will get there

C. Here... A narrow gate(KJV) / door (NIV)

@ Matthew

- wide = destruction
- narrow = life

D. Had no doubt he would be saved

- Jews believed no Gentiles would go

\*The question -

2. The Answer - "strive" (24)

A. Because no foregone conclusion

B. "Strive" means literally to "agonize"

- hard to understand...
- opposite of Universalism

C. The Opposite of those who:

- want to go in without conversion
- want to go in, in a lazy way
- want to go in, in their own way
- want to go in, with reservations
- want to go in without any cost or trouble
- want to go in without rules or restraints
- want to go in without any thought or reflection

D. Strivers are sincere - it's easy to identify the "strivers"

- with a pure heart
- really want it and will do whatever to get it

!!).

E. Two Doctrines impacted

- Election - just chosen if "strive"
- Once saved, always saved - strive to enter, not to stay saved

**3. Some are Refused Entrance (24-28)**

A. The gate is shut

- how different from our current mind set
- you cannot go to heaven

B. Forget that Jesus said "no"

- 1) No to some would-be followers
  - Rich Young Ruler
  - Luke 14 - unless you hate mom and dad
- 2) No to mom and brothers
- 3) No to Satan's enticements
- 4) No to mom of Peter and John
- 5) No to His own will at Gethsemane
- 6) Here so consistent - strive to enter in

**4. Reaction**

A. But Jesus...

- we ate with you
  - we cast out demons (in Matthew)
  - they - obviously associated with
  - but He says I don't know you
- So different in being associated with Jesus and knowing Him

B. Picture... knocking

- Image
- standing
  - knocking
  - calling
  - reasoning with
  - weeping and gnashing of teeth
  - waiting to get in - denied

**5. Things are Different There (29-30)**

A. First, most direct application - Jews reject, Gentiles enter

B. Often heard: "We're gonna be surprised who will be there"

- often said because we think
  - Buddhists
  - unbelievers who are moral
  - No! I think the Bible is straightforward in who's going and not
- But, its really simple here - those who enter heaven
- \*\*Are simply those who know Him, those who reject Him would not go**

C. Jesus spent His life going after sinners

- He taught openly, publically
- His miracles were open they were public
- and those who repented they who received him - saved/ simply
- enter a new relationship - know Him

D. A direct application for us...

- these should have received Him, others will