

Good Morning,

With the time that we have together I would like to share with you from this thought, the kingdom of heaven is like...

I was speaking with a group of clergy colleagues the other day and as part of the icebreaker the leader asked a question that I am passing along to you this morning.

She asked in this season and stage in your life what teaching of Jesus is most profound and impacting who you are today. In this season and stage what saying of Jesus is causing you to stretch beyond where you are to where you think God is calling you to be?

For somebody your answer may be that teaching on forgiveness, because you know what its like to learn how to forgive, and to hear Jesus challenge us to forgive 70 times 7.

For somebody else maybe it's your prayer life. Maybe you realize your prayer life is a little insufficient a little deficient and you hear Jesus talking to you about that persistent widow that kept knocking on the judges door to remind you that you have to pray and pray and pray and to keep on praying until the lord answers.

Somebody else maybe its you learning to walk by faith like Peter getting out of that boat hearing Jesus say come.

For somebody else maybe its learning not to worry,
when Jesus says seek ye first the kingdom of God and
everything else will fall into its rightful place.

What Teaching of Jesus challenges you the most?

When it came time for me to answer I said I am
currently being most stretched most challenged most
impacted by the same parables that we find in our
Gospel today. Jesus is teaching us about what the
kingdom of heaven is like. What an undertaking. What
is the kingdom of heaven like?

Jesus says that the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard
seed, just a tiny little thing, that someone took and
sowed in their field.

Jesus says that it is the smallest of seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.

Jesus says the kingdom of heaven is like yeast, that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.

Jesus says, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

What is the kingdom of heaven like?

I don't know about you but I have been spending a lot of time these days thinking about this question. I want to talk about three things that Jesus shows us about the kingdom of heaven and what that means for our lives.

I look at each of these parables and notice one common thread. Each of these examples about what the kingdom of heaven is like, take place here on earth.

Jesus could have said the kingdom of heaven, its like some extra terrestrial palace, something out there, but he didn't, he said It's planting a seed, leavening some bread, finding something in a field.

The kingdom of heaven can be right here in front of us.
The kingdom of heaven can be all around us.

The kingdom of heaven is all around us. The second thing that Jesus shows us in these parables is that the main characters that show us what the kingdom of heaven is like; they are just ordinary people. Someone who sows a seed, a woman who bakes a loaf of bread, a man who finds a treasure. Not only is the kingdom of heaven all around us, but it is made up of ordinary people. Like me, Like you, like all of us.

Ordinary people, doing ordinary things, which leads me to my third point about what the kingdom of heaven is like. All of the images that Jesus shares with us about heaven have something in common, they are all small things.

Small things that when nurtured and cared for and tended to, grow. Be it planting a seed, or baking a loaf of bread. I recently tried to bake and it might be ordinary, but its not easy.

It takes a little perseverance and follow through in order for it to rise.

The kingdom of heaven is something that starts off so tiny, the size of a mustard seed. But when it grows, it gives home and life to so much of God's creation.

The world needs people to build the kingdom of God now more than ever.

As I look around the world I know this to be true. As I listen to conversations that are had I know this to be true. As I pray about our future as a Church, as country, as a world I know this to be true.

If I may I would like to tell you about something that I have been baking. I have been having many conversations in response to the turbulent times that we have been living through about the need to express and unburden our communities, and then beginning to organize a process to tell our truths and begin the work of reconciling.

Many of you know a big part of my early formation took place while I lived in South Africa.

Earlier this week I had the opportunity to have a conversation with the archbishop for southern Africa and I got to pick his brain about their process for telling truth and reconciliation.

Its funny because as we were talking I asked him a question about how their country was able to move their conversation from small pockets to encompass a great many people.

And his answer was much like what Jesus is teaching us in our gospel today, he said plant the seeds, begin the conversations even if only in small pockets and then watch them grow and get life and then give life. I found that so encouraging that I had to share it with yall.

We have to work to grow this kingdom of God. Jesus tells us these parables and they might each seem like different examples, detached and unrelated. But their not, The kingdom of heaven is like someone planting a seed and someone baking a loaf of bread and finding some treasure.

The kingdom of heaven is all of these things. We each have a part to play and a piece of this most sacred puzzle.

My prayer for us all is that we would know this, my prayer for us all is that we would live like this.

My prayer for us all is that we would believe that we would plant the seed that will grow and change the world. That we would bake that loaf of bread that would change the world. That we all would do our little piece and watch that little piece grow.