

Have you noticed that in the parables that we've been hearing in Matthew 13, that they have progressed? First, the one who sows the seed teaches us about his grace, about of its abundance, of almost what we would say is careless, but really lovingly casts the seeds everywhere and lets them land where they will. And then we heard about the wheat and the weeds, and they teach us to wait, to wait on God's timing. I don't know about you, but I've learned in my life that when it's God's timing, it's pretty smooth. When we force it, it can be really rough.

And today, Jesus is teaching us to be aware of the inbreaking in the kingdom and just these small, what almost might seem insignificant ways, and then to be about bringing those ways into this broken world.

The first parable talks about a mustard seed. So how is the kingdom of heaven like that little seed? Can I have the next one that is a bush? So, imagine that little seed that you can hardly see, and if you've ever dropped them on your floor, they're impossible to get up. Blossoms into that. Blossoms into something that can care for God's creation. Jesus was and is a mustard seed. Something that the world said was insignificant, almost irritating because he kept getting in their faces and inviting them into a different way. But Jesus is also about caring for all God's world. And so that mustard seed that is tiny can grow into amazing things. So God's church, where we might think is tiny, has the capacity to change the world if we will only allow the Spirit to do the Spirit's work.

Think about this. The kingdom of heaven is like yeast where a woman took and mixed it in to the flour until it was leavened. You know, you can't even see the yeast, but if you don't have it, your bread does not rise, and you have pretty horrible bread. I've tried to eat bread that my yeast didn't rise. I don't know if the birds even ate it. It was that bad.

Think about it. The church, or perhaps our faith that we think might be insignificant, has the power to change the world. Given the yeast of God mixed in to the world, has the power to bring peace and love and mercy and grace. That yeast brings our faith to life. And without it, we're just flat flour. But with God's yeast, we can feed the world God's love and mercy and grace.

The next one, God says, "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sold everything to find this treasure." He found a treasure in the field and he wanted it. So, he sold everything to get it. So, my question is, what are we willing to sacrifice as humans for the treasure of God's love, of God's mercy, of God's salvation, of eternal life? Are we willing to let go of everything that stands in our way of being disciples of Christ? Are we willing, in essence, to be like the farmer who gave everything up so that he could own that land that held the treasure?

And then this pearl of great value. This pearl of great value, the priceless pearl, is the gift of God's love and mercy and grace and salvation. And it is ours. It is ours for the following. It is ours for the willingness to look for it, to be in prayer, to study the Bible, to practice our faith, even when we're not sure if we can find that treasure.

Homily - July 26, 2026

The fish - we are called to cast the nets of God's love and mercy and grace out and let the fish come. They might be good fish, maybe they're bad fish, but our work is to cast out the word of God. So may we be about that and let God worry about who's the good fish and who's the bad fish.

And I've got one more example that is not in the scripture, but I came across this example, and I thought it was really interesting. In Winston-Salem in North Carolina, there is a bakery. It's a Moravian bakery. It's called Winkler Bakery. And it has been operating almost 220 years. And the rumor is that if you put raw dough into the rafters, that within a day, the raw dough will start to rise. Because there's so much yeast in the building that the raw dough can't help but to rise.

Thought about that image for the church, for you and I, for all of us gathered here today and gathered around the world. How can the yeast in your heart, how can the yeast in this place, how can the yeast in this community allow us to rise like the dough in the rafters of Winkler Bakery? How can we be so infused with God's love and God's grace and God's mercy that we can't help but feed others with God's truth?

That's my question for you this week. How can you rise with the need of God's love and mercy and grace? Amen.