

PRAY EVERY DAY July 12, 2020 Resource

Mustard Seed Parable from Matthew 13:31-32, NRSV

“The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the 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.”

A Collect for Proper 12 from The Book of Common Prayer, 1979

O God, protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: Increase and multiply upon us your mercy; that, with you as our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we lose not the things eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Bishop Sharma Lewis Read the Bible in 2020 Challenge

More resources at www.vaumc.org/2020BibleChallenge

July 8 – 28 “Fruit of the Spirit: Goodness”

July 13: Exodus 33:17-19

July 17: Psalm 27:4, 13-14

July 14: Nahum 1:7

July 18: John 10:10-11

July 15: Ephesians 2:8-10

July 19: Romans 15:1-7

July 16: Psalm 25:7-8

Small Group or Personal Study

Read Matthew 13:31-32.

Use the questions below for small group or personal study:

- Jesus said the kingdom of God is like a mustard seed which is very small. One of the things that happens in the parable is great growth which is beyond belief. What stories in the Bible remind you of God starting with something small and in God’s power multiplying it greatly? What stories from your life or experience do you have where God takes something small and plants it in the world and it grew to be a blessing to others here?
- Notice the mustard seed is planted on purpose. It is not dropped by mistake or spread the ways seeds naturally do. Someone sowed that seed in the field. God plants the seemingly small kingdom on purpose. Notice the images in the parable: sower, mustard seed, field, and birds. These are quite earthly things, a lot like Jesus who was telling the parable. God plants heaven in the earth. What has God planted in you or what is God trying to plant in you?
- The growth of the mustard seed in Matthew could be compared to Jack’s beanstalk. Mustard seeds don’t usually grow so much as Matthew describes where they are trees with birds in their branches. Jesus is probably not doing botany in this section but theology in describing the kingdom of heaven. The growth is beyond expectation and would be quite noticeable in a field taking up a lot of space. The mercy, compassion, and justice of God take up a lot of space! They will fill creation. Some people get excited or anxious about kingdom growth. What gives you concern about how much space the kingdom of heaven takes up? What gives you hope that even though the kingdom of heaven might seem mustard seed small right now, it will grow to give shade and shelter for many?

Spend time in silence

Prayer for others and yourself

The Lord's Prayer

The Bishop Sharma Lewis Call to Pray at Noon Every Day

Almighty God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

We thank you for your blessings, past, present and future. You are our rock and the source of our hope in all things and at all times. As Jehovah Jireh, our provider God, we ask you this day to stretch out your mighty hand and eradicate from the face of the earth forever this virus called COVID-19 (coronavirus) that is spreading rapidly from continent to continent.

We also pray that you, Jehovah Rapha, our healing God, would place your hand upon all of those who have been stricken by this virus and restore them to full health. Be with those who have lost loved ones and are grieving. Protect all who are caring for those with this virus and keep them from contracting it themselves. Calm our fears and provide us with your peace that surpasses all understanding. Strengthen us with the joy of the Lord and help us to hold firmly to the hope that only you can provide.

Unify us that we, the Virginia Annual Conference, may be able to experience anew the promise of your presence in and through the unity of our faith, hope and trust in you in the days ahead and forever. We offer this prayer in the mighty name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

AMEN.

Share the Love of Jesus because It's All about Relationships

How will you or how did you share the love of Jesus with neighbor today with no strings attached? Write it down and share about it this week in small group for support and prayer.

What God Is Going to Do from Ezekiel 17:22-24, NRSV

Thus says the Lord GOD:

I myself will take a sprig from the lofty top of a cedar; I will set it out.

I will break off a tender one from the topmost of its young twigs;

I myself will plant it on a high and lofty mountain.

On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it,

in order that it may produce boughs and bear fruit and become a noble cedar.

Under it every kind of bird will live,

in the shade of its branches will nest winged creatures of every kind.

All the trees of the field shall know that I am the LORD.

I bring low the high tree, I make high the low tree;

I dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish.

I the LORD have spoken; I will accomplish it.