

It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs,

In the name etc.

Good things come in small packages.

I was always sceptical of this advice as a child. To my childhood mind, bigger was better. A big parcel or present was always going to be better than a small one. Over time though I have come to realise that bigger isn't always better.

Indeed as anyone who has ever had toothache will know- something small has the power to make a real affect. One small change in a day, one small alteration to a recipe, one extra person at a party- these can have far reaching effects. Someone who understood this was Princess Alice of Gloucester. When she was told that the dance floor of York House would collapse if more than twenty people used it, she promptly composed a party invite list of the twenty one people she liked least.

Yes, little things can make a big difference. For all the truth of the previous examples, it still seems like a cliché but it's something we often struggle to acknowledge in our lives of faith. It's is easy for us to expect big things from God because, well, the very greatness of the divine, the awe and majesty of the creator point us in that direction.

And all that is true. The great fact of Christianity is that we, small as we are, are invited into a relationship with the great majesty of God. That for all our insignificance, the one who is everything seeks us out to know and love us. Wants us to be part of the Kingdom of God. However, both our lessons today point to a subtle truth, namely that they way that happens is often through small changes, little steps.

St Paul in his letter makes clear that it is the work of God in us- the quiet, at times almost imperceptible work of dying to self and living to God- that is the root of our Christian identity. Then in our Gospel Christ talks about the growth of the kingdom as being like that of the very smallest seed of all, the mustard. A tiny thing leads to a great thing, the greatest thing in fact.

How does the kingdom grow? Or rather how can we cultivate its growth in our lives?

Well with small habits. Little acts which confirm our lives and souls to the patterns of the divine. The patterns of service and truth and love.

Of course there will be times we fail, times we fall short. As Paul makes clear in the second letter to the Corinthians, we walk by faith not by sight. There will be times that we stumble. We are not gods, nor are we called to be gods, and acknowledging that human nature is flawed and fallen and not perfect is the first step to seeking its healing. We are not gods but are we are called to an eventual oneness with God.

Cultivating those small, mustard seed sized acts of service or prayer or faith or love are the ways in which we more closely enter into that oneness, the ways in which we draw closer to the kingdom. Think to your own lives, to your own relationship with God. Are there small things you might take up, small things you might do to bring yourself closer to God? Might you pray a little more, attend church a little more regularly, might you read scripture more often, might you

It need only be a baby step, a small habit or minor adjustment. But if it brings you closer to God, then do it. For when it comes to the kingdom of God, good things really do come in small packages.

In the name of etc.