

Sermon Text: Luke 13:18-21 The Progress of God's Kingdom

Christ encourages our faith to follow His gospel of the Kingdom by assuring us of His Kingdom's inevitable progress, international blessing, and universal transformation.

1) You can trust that God's Kingdom, ruled by Christ, comes with inevitable progress.

- a) Small beginnings:
 - i) Proverbial smallness of the mustard seed
 - ii) Small lump of leaven dough against a colossal mound of dough
 - iii) work of the Kingdom that Jesus performed in His estate of humiliation seemed small
- b) Inevitable Progress
 - i) The "garden" is land cultivated for growth.
 - ii) "A man" is there to tend the seed.
 - iii) The "grain of mustard seed" is programmed to grow into a mustard plant.
 - iv) "It grew and became a tree"—largest plant in the garden (see Matt. 13:31)
 - v) Leaven is designed to be invasive, eventually spreading through the whole mound.
- c) Luke's second volume, Acts, records the rapid growth and spread of Christianity.
- d) **Application:** Inevitable progress does not mean easy going. Christ tells us to expect opposition. Yet we can face opposition with hope in the promise of the progress of the Kingdom.

2) You can trust that God's Kingdom, ruled by Christ, comes with international blessing.

- a) "The birds of the air made nests in its branches"—OT background in Daniel 4:12; Ezekiel 17:23; Ezekiel 31:6; Psalm 104:12, 16-17; nations under government of a great kingdom
 - i) Why a mustard plant instead of a cedar?
 - ii) Perhaps to convey the ironic appearance of the Kingdom
- b) Luke 13:29 "And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the Kingdom of God." Acts 1:8 "you will be My witnesses . . . to the end of the earth."
- c) **Application:** The Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) is not a cruel exercise in futility (See Psalm 2; Acts 4:23-30).

3) You can trust that God's Kingdom, ruled by Christ, comes with universal transformation.

- a) "Three measures of flour" is a table load of dough. Transformation imperceptible.
- b) "Until it was all leavened"—total transformation
 - i) Not universalism in that every person is saved (see Luke 13:23-24)
 - ii) Universal in that it leaves nothing undone (see Revelation 21:5)
- c) "Therefore"—connecting this teaching with previous narrative (see Romans 8:19-22)
- d) **Application:** Looks can be deceiving. God has brought much transformation through the spread of the gospel. We have not arrived, but progress has been made and will continue to be made.

Conclusion: Remember that God's Kingdom, ruled by Christ, comes with inevitable progress, international blessing, and universal transformation. Pray with conviction, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Doxology: "To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever! Amen!" From Revelation 5:13-14

