

“THE POWER OF GOD’S WORD”

(Matthew 13:31-32, 44-46)

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus used parables [or illustrations] to teach and explain what God was really like – that he was loving and compassionate and desired all people to turn from their sin and come to him.

People in Jesus’ day, and for years before, knew of a promised Messiah, Saviour, who would come and deliver them. But their idea of the Messiah was that he would come with might and power!

Jesus contradicts this idea, and speaks of God’s kingdom being like a

MUSTARD SEED and PRICELESS PEARL:

“The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.”

The seed is the Gospel, insignificant in the eyes of the world, and neglected and rejected by many. But this seed is a priceless Pearl, because the Gospel is”

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As Paul said [Romans 1:16]:

“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes.”

This is a picture of the kingdom of God. God’s kingdom comes in a very humble way. Jesus the baby born in Bethlehem. Preaching all over the place, reaching out and mingling with sinners, outcasts, and other undesirables. And then coming into Jerusalem, not as a conqueror, leading a mighty army, but riding on a humble donkey, a beast of burden. Jesus came as a humble king, a man of sorrows, riding into Jerusalem to suffer and to die, to take on himself the burden and curse of our sins. This is how God’s kingdom comes.

This is how our forgiveness and our life and salvation come, in humble ways. It is Jesus dying on a cross, in shame and rejection, that is actually God’s wisdom and God’s power. Christ, the Son of God, must die for our sins, in our place, in order for us to have life in all its fullness, a life restored to fellowship with God!. It looks like weakness and foolishness, to think that anything grand or glorious could come out of such suffering and death, but there it is.

This is how the kingdom comes. The Christ rises from the dead, though. Death could not hold him. It will not hold us, either, and all who trust in him.

So then the risen Lord meets with his surprised disciples, and he commissions them to be his apostles. He sends them out, a small band of twelve, to do the impossible: to take this message of a suffering and dying and rising Saviour to the ends of the earth. Well, God is in the business of doing the impossible, and so they go, and so they preach and teach. And the church grows and expands.

The power of God's Word in that insignificant seed, the Gospel message, that priceless pearl, was seen in the effect it had on so many people, transforming their lives and actions – so much so that leaders in some cities complained about the Gospel preachers:

“These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.”

The Gospel, that insignificant mustard seed, is a priceless pearl and it is:

THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD

“The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” [1 Cor 1:18]

We are urged to depend on and trust:

THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD!

The Word first spoken at our Baptism when we were joined to Christ death and resurrection and became heirs of God's kingdom:

“You have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.” 1 Peter 1:23

The Word in **Absolution** in worship for Christ is in our midst and says:

“Be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven.”

And the Words spoken over his holy **Supper**:

“This is my body . . . this is my blood, given and shed for you.”

Take up his invitation to call on him in **Prayer**.

“Call on me in the day of trouble and I will deliver you.”

Trust the Word's effectiveness, as God declared through Isaiah [55:10-11]:

“As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”

We can confidently trust in the effectiveness and power of God's Word, as did Paul when he said:

"I am confident that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

That is the day we receive the inheritance of eternal life.

And then Paul continues:

"we all share in God's grace."

That is why we can say with absolute certainty that

THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD

is at work in us through Word and Sacrament today!

Rejoice! We are partakers of God's grace!

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

The Love of God the Father,

And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,

Be with us always.

Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Sermon by Pastor John Simboras

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