



## **“Seeds Grow, They Just Do It!”**

Pastor Andy CastroLang

June 17, 2018

### **Scripture (CEB):**

#### **Mark 4:26-33**

<sup>26</sup> Then Jesus said, “This is what God’s kingdom is like. It’s as though someone scatters seed on the ground, then sleeps and wakes night and day. The seed sprouts and grows, but the farmer doesn’t know how. The earth produces crops all by itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full head of grain. Whenever the crop is ready, the farmer goes out to cut the grain because it’s harvest time.”

He continued, “What’s a good image for God’s kingdom? What parable can I use to explain it? Consider a mustard seed. When scattered on the ground, it’s the smallest of all the seeds on the earth; but when it’s planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all vegetable plants. It produces such large branches that the birds in the sky are able to nest in its shade.”

<sup>33</sup> With many such parables he continued to give them the word, as much as they were able to hear.

### **Sermon:**

You know those little maple wing seed things? They fly out of the sky, all over the place, land on everything, and trash your yard? Or maybe it’s pine cones, or maybe it’s the little round seed pods that flutter from the highest branches of the elm trees?

We all know about them.

They make a mess.

On our cars, our sidewalks, our yards.

If the Spring is wet, they ALL germinate and make a different kind of mess, till we mow them down.

If Jesus was here in Spokane telling stories, parables for the Reign of God, the Design of God, maybe he would begin with those seeds.

The Reign of God is like a tree that sends out it's little maple whirly things...

The Kingdom of God is like an elm tree casting off hundreds and hundreds of little round seed pods that germinate in the darnedest places: your vegetable bed, your lawn, your flower boxes, the cracks in the sidewalk. You didn't do anything at all, they did what they were gonna do; they grew. You didn't help them, and you can't stop them from growing.

We are familiar with this parable, so we "get it", we get the idea of what he is saying. But it's just as interesting what he is not saying: he is not saying the kingdom of God is built by a vast army, by a king, by conquest and by might. He is *not* saying, as people would say of the kingdom of Israel in its heyday, that it was like a mighty cedar of Lebanon. (A tall and beautiful coniferous tree; kinda like a giant redwood, very impressive!)

Nope, nothing impressive. Nothing like the Roman empire, that declared the "sun never sets" on it, because it spanned the known world. And guess whose Air Force in this time, declares "the sun never sets" on its reach and power? Yup, the U.S. Air Force. Impressive, right?

Maybe Jesus, if he lived in Spokane in 2018, would continue on with his parabling: the Kingdom of God is like a dandelion seed, tiny little puff, floating away after a three year old blows on it.

But boy do they germinate, boy do they grow. Not big, not like a tree or even a fancy rose garden at Manito.

But those dandelions are everywhere, they are familiar and despised, they are a struggle for most people. Pull them, poison them...they always seem to come back!

They have their uses, especially for 3 year olds who love to blow on the seeds and watch them float away. The leaves are nourishing, the plant can be made into wine.

But if you see a lawn without dandelions, you are warned...powerful chemicals have been used to eradicate them. You may not want to lie down on that grass, sleep on that lawn!

So what might we learn from such parables regarding the Reign of God?

How many of you are familiar with the story behind our two Romanesque towers?

When the church was first built we had one short circular tower and doorway in to our sanctuary until sometime early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century? Then, the “church fathers” decided to tear it down and build two larger, taller towers?

Why?

“To be more imposing”. That is literally written in to a history of this place.

No mustard plants protecting helpless little birds then! Westminster had power and powerful people in it: the mayor, the money makers, the influential. Westminster had preachers with societal credentials, Westminster even hosted a revival with a famous evangelist. No dandelions for Westminster, no siree!

Well, those days are over and gone. And maybe, just maybe Jesus might recognize us as a “home for the birds”, a place to “nest in the shade” for the little ones and the powerless, the tired and the hungry.

Jesus told a lot of parables, but he NEVER connected the inbreaking of God’s kingdom, of God’s reign, to money or power, with armies and conquest, battles and bloodshed, pain and death.

Instead, it comes as humbly as seeds do. Small, but sturdy and full of life and possibility.

And I like to think, the Reign of God that Jesus lived and taught us to look for, comes like a dandelion: bright! Blazing yellow in a drab wintery world. Almost the first of all growing things to tell us that Spring is here, life is calling!

And tough, such a tough little plant! Growing in the cracks in the sidewalk, growing in abandoned lots, and growing in manicured lawns.

Growing everywhere.

Depending on your attitude, dandelions can be ok, even pretty, certainly useful too.

And they make the children happy!

What sort of parable might Jesus tell today, about the plants and the powerful, the people and the protection they need, the sturdy strength of the seed to do what it does, even without our interventions of power or money or force?

“What parable can I use to explain it?” Jesus asks.