

**To Speak in Parables**  
 Proclamation of the Gospel in the Parables of Jesus

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www.CrossMarks.com

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Parables function as metaphors  
 challenging or inviting the audience  
 into a new or deeper experience of  
 God's dominion, a dominion  
 identified with those who are the  
**LAST LOST LEAST LITTLE**  
 and **LIFELESS**

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**Experiencing the Parables of Jesus**

- Keep in mind the context and whose parable exactly we are considering (Jesus, Gospel author, Church)
- Parables are to be experienced
- Expect to be surprised: don't 'domesticate' the parables; consider how they might be 'subversive'
- The enduring value of Jesus' parables is rooted in their presentation of fundamental, essential, timeless truths (but we need to be careful about how much we can say...)
- The parables invite multiple interpretations
- We can expect a consistency in Jesus' message related to the dominion of God > They are proclamations of the Gospel apart from but consistent with Christ's death and resurrection


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**This Is for the Birds**  
*The Parable of the Mustard Seed*

**Mark 4.30-32**


**The parable as a point or moral**

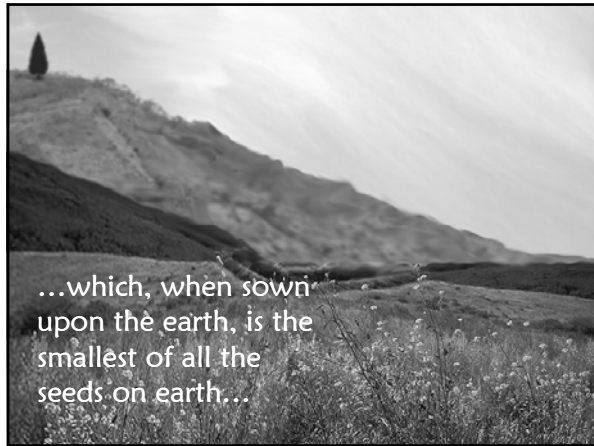
This parable provides moral instruction:



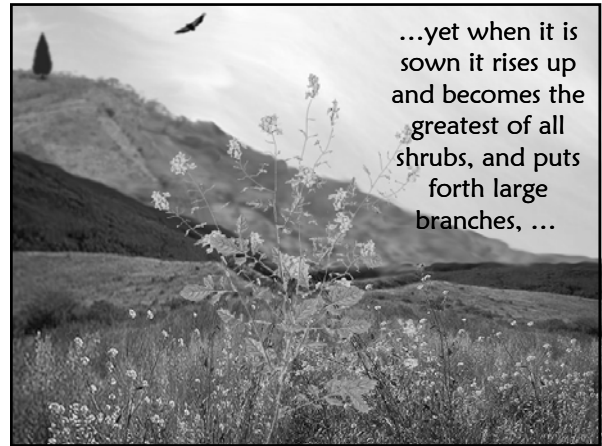
*From  
 Small Beginnings  
 Come  
 Great Endings*

It is like a  
 seed of mustard , ...

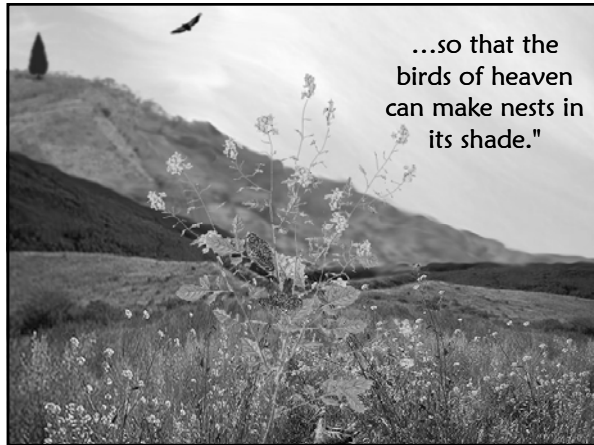




...which, when sown upon the earth, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth...



...yet when it is sown it rises up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, ...



...so that the birds of heaven can make nests in its shade."

<p>Matthew 13:31-32 The Dominion of the heavens is like a seed of mustard 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 heaven come and make nests in its branches.</p>	<p>Mark 4:30-32 ...the Dominion of God, ... is like a seed of mustard , which, when sown upon the earth, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it rises up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of heaven can make nests under its shade.</p>	<p>Luke 13:18-19 ... the Dominion of God ... is like a seed of mustard that someone took and threw in his garden;  and it grew  and became a tree, and the birds of heaven made nests in its branches.</p>
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## Where would a person plant mustard?

### JEWISH GARDENING PRACTICES

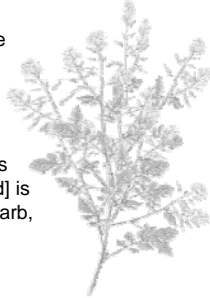
No kind of seed may be sown in a garden-bed, but any kind of vegetable may be sown in it. Mustard and small beans are deemed a kind of seed.

*Mishnah, Kilaim 3.2*

### GREEK GARDENING PRACTICES

There are three seed-times for all things grown in gardens... [In the winter period] is sown beet, lettuce, rocket, monk's rhubarb, mustard, coriander, dill, cress...

Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants VII*



Matthew 13:31-32

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Mark 4:30-32

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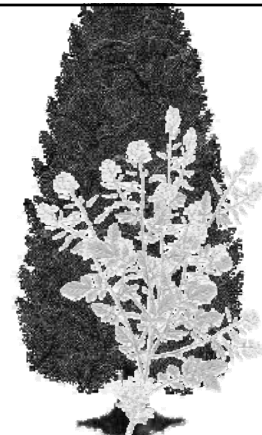
## A mustard "tree"?

Birds make nests in its branches?



The mighty cedar tree grows to about 100 feet tall.

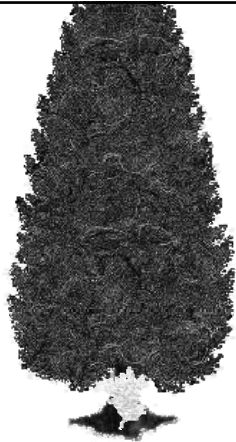
A mustard plant grows to at most 8 feet tall.



**BIBLICAL BACKGROUND:**

*Ezekiel 17:22-23*

Thus says the Lord God: I myself will take a sprig from the lofty top of a cedar; ... 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.



**WHY A MUSTARD PLANT?**

Smallest seed  
An ignoble plant  
Planted in wrong place  
and yet...  
it grows large and  
provides a place of shelter



What are the dominions of the world like?



What is the Dominion of God like?

The Blooming Prairie (MN) Blossoms!

Richland High School (WA) Bombers!

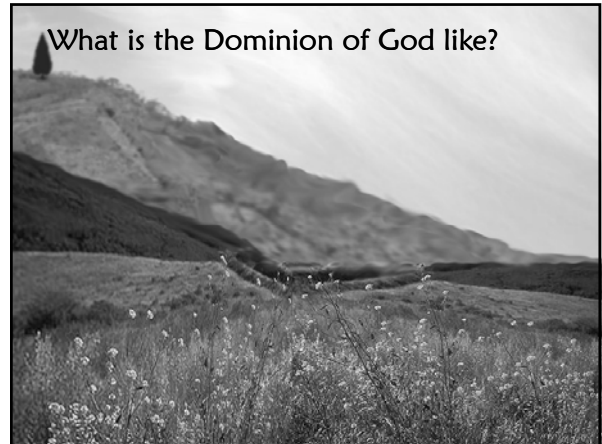
2006 - 2007

**Richland High School**  
RICHLAND, WA

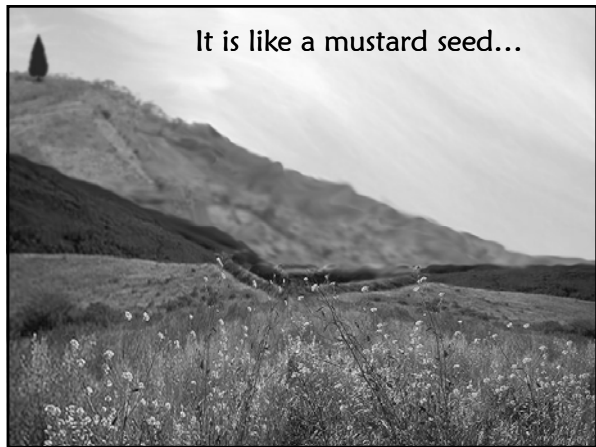
Concordia College (MN) Cobbers!



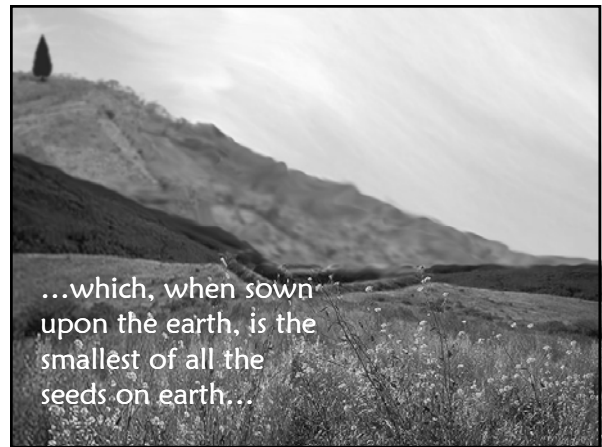
It is like a dandelion planted in a backyard...



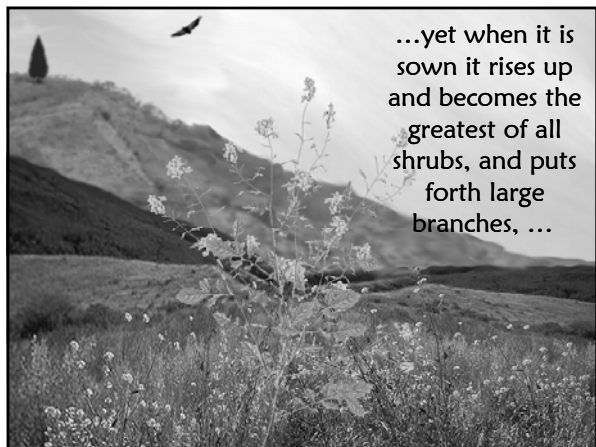
What is the Dominion of God like?



It is like a mustard seed...



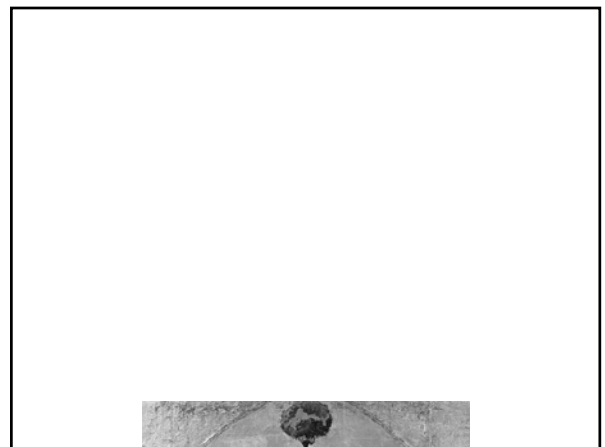
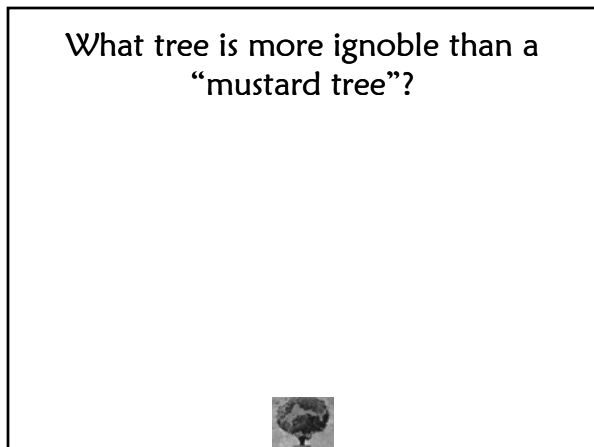
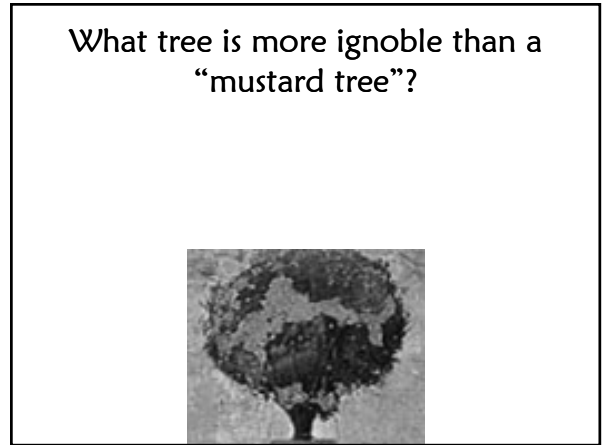
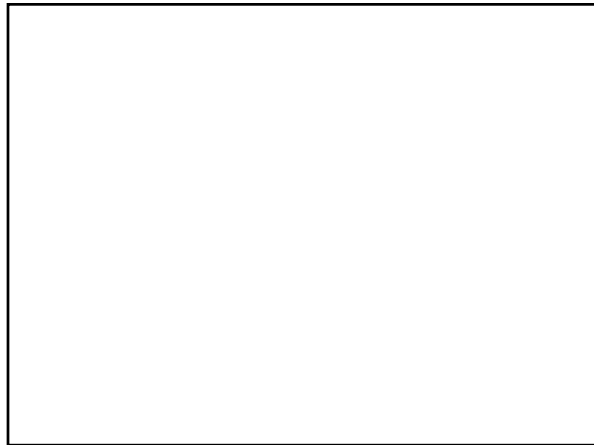
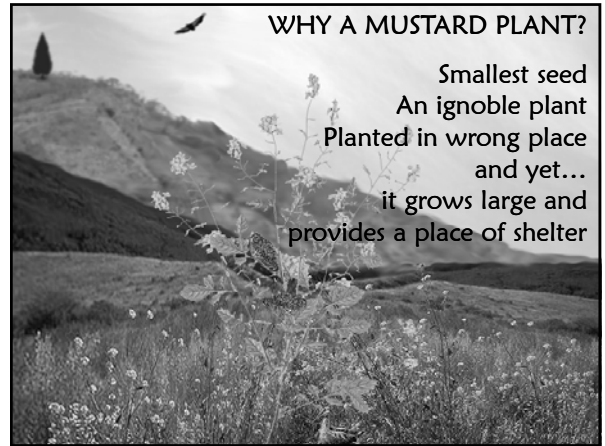
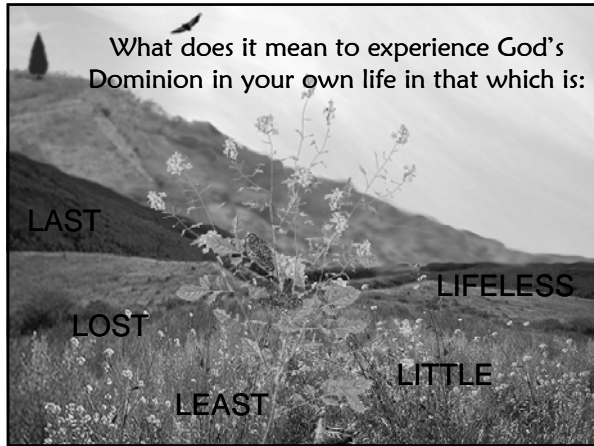
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