



Main Point: Your small acts of faith matter because they have the power to turn into something massively significant.

Key Scriptures: Matthew 13:31-32, Matthew 17:20, Galatians 6:9

Welcome

Good evening, everyone. I'm so glad you're here tonight. We have a lot to get to, but first, I want to take a moment and pray over our time together and the week ahead.

[Teacher's Note: begin with a prayer.]

As you guys probably remember, we recently wrapped up our 'Plot Twist' series, which focused on the parables of Jesus. I hope it was as beneficial for you as it was for me. For those of you that benefitted from that series, I have a surprise for you: there's a part 2! Starting tonight, we will have three more weeks of 'Plot Twist'!

For those of you that are new, the plot twist is an extremely important part of storytelling. It's the part of the story that makes it more dynamic and engaging and powerful. It's what keeps our attention until the end and keeps us interested in the outcome. And sometimes, the plot twist even teaches us something about ourselves.

For example...

[Teacher's Note: At this time play the clip from Toy Story 3 where Lotso reveals his true nature. It can be found here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5eRSsJ7m1w>.]

I didn't see that one coming. Lotso seemed so cute and cuddly. It turned out, he was one of the bad guys, right up there with emperor Zurg from the first Toy Story and Al the chicken man from the second one.

Review

In part 1 of the ‘Plot Twist’ series, we talked about three parables (Sower, Talents, Prodigal Son). We learned some pretty powerful lessons and I hope to continue that trend in part 2.

Tonight, we're going to tackle one of Jesus's shortest stories, but don't let its length fool you. It's packed with a powerful message that completely turns our expectations of God's kingdom upside down. It's a message that directly relates to your life, and it's a message you need to hear. Before we get there, I have a question for you.

What's the smallest thing you've ever seen that grew into something huge or really important (a seed, an idea, a movement)? [Teacher's Note: allow for responses. Tell a story from your own life or the life of someone you know.]

What immediately came to my mind was the story of Apple. The company started in a garage with Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak, who were just two friends with a small idea and a passion for technology. That tiny, humble beginning grew into one of the largest and most influential companies in the world, changing how we use computers, phones, and media.

The truth is, ***the most significant things in our lives often start with the smallest of beginnings.***

Today, our focus is on one of Jesus's shortest parables. It's a story about a tiny, little seed that turns into a massive tree. Just like in the Parable of the Sower, this is a story about a seed. But unlike that parable, this one focuses on what happens *AFTER* the seed was planted and it began to grow.

Lesson

Let's turn to Matthew chapter 13 and see exactly what Jesus said.

Matthew 13:31-32 (ESV)

He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than

all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

On the surface, this parable seems pretty simple, right? A man plants a tiny seed, and it grows into a big plant. We understand that process. But to see the "plot twist" of this story, we have to understand the culture Jesus lived in and the people He was speaking to.

To us, a mustard seed is a common metaphor for something small. But in Jesus's day, it was literally known as the smallest seed you could plant. Its tiny size makes the story's ending even more dramatic and unbelievable. It sets up the contrast between a humble beginning and a massive outcome.

So, why did Jesus choose a mustard seed and not an olive or fig tree seed, which would also grow into large plants? The mustard plant was very common, and its fast, wild growth was often seen as a nuisance. It could take over a whole field, but it wasn't a noble plant.

Jesus chose something ordinary, easily dismissed, and even slightly annoying to make His point. He's using the mustard seed to represent something as grand and glorious as the Kingdom of Heaven.

The "plot twist" of this parable isn't just that the seed grew; it's the contrast between the tiny, humble seed and the massive, bird-nesting tree it became. The point Jesus made was that the Kingdom of Heaven doesn't always come in a big, powerful, or flashy way. It can start with something incredibly small and insignificant, something no one would pay attention to.

It can begin with a simple act of kindness, a moment of faith, or one person sharing the gospel. This humble beginning completely challenges the expectations people had for a God's kingdom coming as a powerful, conquering one.

The birds making nests in the branches is a bit of an unusual detail. What do you think that represents? [[Teacher's Note: allow for responses.](#)]

This detail shows the expansive, life-giving nature of the kingdom. The mustard plant provides shelter and safety for others. It represents the idea that God's kingdom is a place of rest, refuge, and a spiritual home for all people. It's an open invitation to find safety and rest with God.

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