

# Kingdom Living Today: Small and Large

by Richard Brooks FPC-D

**SCRIPTURE:** *(God's voice in the Past)*

*Matthew 13:*

**<sup>31</sup> Jesus told them another parable:**  
**“The kingdom of heaven (*Kingdom of God*) is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field.**  
**<sup>32</sup> Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it becomes the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.”**

**<sup>33</sup> Jesus told them still another parable:** **“The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough.”**

**<sup>44</sup> (Jesus continued) “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy he went and sold all he had and bought that field.”**

**<sup>45</sup> “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls.**  
**<sup>46</sup> When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.”**

(NIV translation with Richard Brooks' exegesis)

The word of the Lord; Thanks be to God!

**SERMON:** *(God's voice to us Today)*

**The Kingdom of Heaven:**  
**Importance of Small to Large      In Size      In Value**

*"Share the good news of the gospel at all times. Use words only if necessary."*

- St. Francis of Assisi

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## The Kingdom of Heaven:

### Importance of Small to Large

- In Size
- In Value

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## **SERMON:** *(God's voice to us Today)*

The Kingdom of Heaven is here today and awaiting us tomorrow. Some religion's traditions focus only on the Kingdom in this world. Others focus only on the Kingdom to come.

Christianity (biblically understood) calls us to live in today's Kingdom while eagerly anticipating the eternal Kingdom.

God's Kingdom is diminished and limited if relegated only to eternity. The Kingdom of God is among us and within us as we live by God's values in our daily lives with expectant anticipation to the fulfillment in eternity. St Paul writes to the Roman Church, "we wait in eager anticipation as if a woman in childbirth for the glory of God to be revealed."

Jesus of Nazareth, a Jewish rabbi who we claim is lord and savior to the world, taught more about God's Kingdom than any other topic addressed. The Kingdom of heaven or the Kingdom of God is the central theme to his preaching. It is mentioned in all the Abrahamic religions, including Islam and Judaism, but is most pronounced in the preaching of Jesus. In the Gospels, the word "salvation" occurs seven times. The term "kingdom" is spoken 100 times. Jesus taught "the Kingdom of Heaven/God" more than any other topic.

Important things are small in **SIZE**: God's Kingdom, it is here-now and tomorrow-next day. The Kingdom of heaven, the Kingdom of God, as Jesus describes in these parables deal with both size and value. Jesus told his followers that small mustard seed, one of the smallest of seeds, once planted becomes a large plant. It grows to become a tree, a tree in which birds can light and under which strangers can find shade and refuge from the heat.

Jesus told about the yeast. A little yeast put into 60 pounds of flour can make bread for a whole village. Small things in size, becoming big things in their impact. As we know, just a little salt makes the flavor of the good recipe come to life for everyone's enjoyment. So, it is with the small mustard seed and a little yeast.

I'm not much of a cook, but I understand that a teaspoon of yeast can be put in up to four cups of flour. If my math is right, that is a 1:200 ratio! It's one of the principles of life. Small things can make a big difference.

Almighty God came to Moses, saying: "I heard the cries of my people in bondage. Go to Pharaoh." Moses replied, "Who am I? I'm not even a good speaker." God gave him his brother Aaron, but Moses was still reluctant.

So often, God calls upon the least of us to stand up to the pharaohs of the world and demand justice and righteousness for God's people, all of God's people. (Let me remind you that we cannot demand justice and righteousness just for ourselves: God's love, justice, and righteousness is for all peoples of the earth.

Confucius, in the 4th Century B.C.E., advised that "**a journey of 1,000 miles begins with but 1 step.**" Let us begin with the first step toward being a part of God's Kingdom. Neil Armstrong was the first person to set foot on the moon with these words, "**one small step for man, one**

**giant leap for mankind."** All of us can begin today to share our small little efforts and see what great things God can do through us.

I was walking down the high school hallway feeling alone and dejected. A teacher stopped me and inquired how I was doing. I told her I wish I was someone else. She looked square in the eyes and said, "Richard, you can do anything you set your mind to do." Her words rang through the hallway and echoed in my mind for many years to come. Those words inspired me when I dropped out of college to push forward to get my degree, get my master's degree, and work on my doctorate. More importantly, her words inspired me in business and in ministry to contribute even in small ways towards what is right and honorable. Years later, I had the opportunity to thank Ms. Miller for her words of encouragement. She did not remember the conversation at all. But her little words helped transform my life!

**What little things can we do in word, thought, and indeed for other people?** How can God use our small contributions in everyday life? St. Francis of Assisi said, "**Proclaim the good news of God's Kingdom all the time and, occasionally, use words.**"

Most important things are the small in **VALUE**: There is another concept that Jesus taught. It is not just the small size of seeds and yeast that makes a significant impact. It is also small things in value that bring great riches. Some items are small and yet contain values that far exceed other more plentiful possessions.

A little girl had accidentally dropped a dime into her mother's prized vase. Naturally, she put her little hand in to recover it. But, when she gripped the coin and held it tight in her fist, she was unable to withdraw her hand. She screamed for help as she struggled to get her hand out of the vase. Her cries attracted the other family members, who pleaded with her to open her hand and then withdraw it from the vase. But no! She held on to her precious little dime and continued to struggle, squirm, and scream. Finally, the costly vase was broken; and with her fist still tightly clenched, she exclaimed, "I've still got my dime". The far more valuable vase was lost for the sake of a paltry coin.

The clenched fist holding tightly to self-interest and tribal bias sacrifices the riches of God's Kingdom. A clenched fist is not open to God's Kingdom in this world or the world to come. Open hands, reaching out to others in love and understanding, are receptive hands that can also receive God's grace and a vision of God's Kingdom.

The prophet Isaiah asked why do you labor for that which does not satisfy. Mother Teresa said, "**Is the God standard not the gold standard that offers the greater wealth.**"

The Kingdom of God is not only something we profess with our mouths but if we do not live it day in and day out as we are individually transformed and working to change those around us and society towards God's righteousness.