

The Gospel reading for June 14<sup>th</sup> is Mark 4: 26-34. There are two short stories contained within this lection.

The first account is a comparison of the kingdom of God to the natural life cycle of a seed. The seed is scattered on the ground, takes root, grows, and is harvested. Jesus is clear in this saying that the seed growing is the result of the benefits of the earth. There is a stewardship affirmation in this passage. God gave us the earth to care for, but also to have dominion over. This passage affords an opportunity to talk about the stewardship of creation. With all the doom and gloom about global warming, science and some politicians have almost taken the position that humanity is a virus on “mother earth.” There is nothing that will deal a blow to bad science and politics like a dose of good theology. The first part of the Markan text will allow the preacher to speak of the stewardship of creation from a Biblical perspective.

The second part of the reading is the mustard seed. Before grabbing an old sermon, some Google-ing of “mustard seed” would be helpful. Before it found its way on hotdogs, hamburgers, and my tie, mustard was used as a medicine. A mustard poultice placed on the chest often eased the symptoms of congestion or a cold. Mustard was valuable because it was a healing agent. Beyond its healing properties known in the time of Jesus, the seed also produced a plant that became a habitat to the birds of the air.

A single dollar in the offering plate can be multiplied through the power of the Holy Spirit to change the world. One act of sacrificial giving can change a life. One small gesture of generosity can bring hope in the middle of despair. The big offerings and gifts make the headlines, the faithful gifts given change the world for Jesus Christ. This is one of the many lectionary texts that offers the pastor a chance to talk about the blessings of God that are brought through our giving.

We care for our world, our time and talents and that is called being a good steward of what God has given us. Then we practice faithful stewardship in our giving and we become that mustard seed of which the kingdom of God is made. We bring healing for some. We allow others to land. We provide shelter and shade for others still, because we are being faithful in our giving. We are being disciples of Jesus Christ when we plant those seeds of faith each Sunday as that offering plate is passed.

So, we discover the lectionary has many opportunities to preach about the subject of stewardship, I wonder how many of us will have the faith to plant those seeds?