

11th Sunday in Ordinary Time - Mark 4:26-34

President Ronald Reagan loved to tell the story of a lady who knocked on a man's door and said, "Do you own a black Pit Bull dog?" The man said, "Yes." Well, the lady said, "I have to tell you, it's dead." The man demanded, "What do you mean it's dead?" "What happened?" And the lady said, "My tiny Chihuahua killed it." And the man said, "Your Chihuahua killed it? How could that happen?" She said, "It got stuck in his throat."

Small things matter. In today's Gospel, Jesus is again speaking in parables. Parables were Jesus' favorite way of teaching. He used parables, because parables force you to think.

You have to pause and use your imagination to consider how the kingdom of God is like two sons, or ten virgins, or a treasure found in a field.

Today Jesus tells us that the kingdom of God is like a mustard seed. Now what is He trying to say? Parables always have multiple meanings. Today I want to suggest to you one possible meaning of the parable of the mustard seed: Jesus is telling us **that small things matter.**

The parable is very clear on this. The mustard seed is the smallest possible seed. Yet, once it is planted, it grows into a sizeable plant that can give shade to the birds of the air.

The mustard seed is very small, just a speck. It would be so easy to lose it or to ignore it or to discard it. But in doing any of those things, we would miss the opportunity to see how it would grow and what it would become.

This lesson of the mustard seed is important, because we live in a culture that values what is big and impressive. We get excited about a new car or the most recent laptop or smart phone.

And we are so keyed into these big and impressive things that at times we overlook what seems to be less. That is unfortunate, because **small things matter**.

They matter because God uses them, and they matter in two different ways. They matter in the actions that we do, and they matter in the things we receive.

As we live any day of our life, we should never discount the small things we can do: a word of love or support to our spouse or a friend, a few moments to affirm a son or daughter about something they are good at or something that they have achieved, a phone call to a friend who is grieving the death of a loved one, or even a thankful smile instead of a vacant stare as we approach the cashier in the supermarket.

These are all small things, tiny things, things that could seem to have no significance. Yet they can be so important because God can choose to use them to build up some person in our lives and to increase the goodness around us. We should **never** discount doing small things in the course of every day.

But neither should we overlook the importance of **receiving** small things each day. For each day there are people in our lives who give us signs of love and support.

How much richer our lives would be if we were open to accept those signs and take them in: the smile of a baby, the person who breaks to let us into traffic, a friend who says to us, “How are you? No really, how are you?” All of these are signs that God is using to show us that we are loved and that there are reasons for hope.

Big and flashy things always seem important. **But small things matter**. Things as little as a mustard seed can shape our lives. We can be the farmer who plants the mustard seed or the soil that receives it—the giver or the receiver.

In both cases small things like a mustard seed can make a difference. God uses the small things in our lives to build His Kingdom.

It is the smallest of all seeds, and becomes the largest of plants.
Small things matter. AMEN.