



SERMON OUTLINE & SERMON





INTRODUCTION & WELCOME



If you have this paper in your hands, it means that you are entrusted with a sermon for the International Day of Children and Young People.

Congratulations! In this outline, you can find some background information and some pointers to make your own sermon. You are a unique person and God speaks to you in a unique way. So, make this sermon your own by reading and listening carefully to what God is saying.

Enjoy this journey with God and be blessed by it and be a blessing to others!

HOW DO I WRITE A SERMON?

1. Take time to read the Scripture verses prayerfully. Do it several times and use three different translations or versions. What catches your attention? What questions do you have? What challenges you? What is God saying to you? Write those down.
2. Read the background information. How does this impact your understanding of the Bible verses? Add your thoughts to your notes.
3. Think about the people you are talking to. Who are they? What is their background? How old are they? What do they need? You can always send a group of children and young people a WhatsApp or Messenger message. Ask them to read the Bible verses and to let you know what questions they have and what challenges them. This information is always very helpful, and it will give you a good direction for your sermon.
4. What is the message you want people to take with them? Write it down in one sentence.



5. Try to focus on one to three points in your sermon. Feel free to choose your own, but here is an example if you want to focus on the Kingdom of God.
 - a. What does the size of the seed tell us about the Kingdom?
 - b. What does the potential growth of the seed tell us about the Kingdom?
 - c. What does the image of the tree with the birds tell us about the Kingdom?
6. You can unwrap these three points with the information and questions you had yourself or from a group of young people.
7. End your sermon with some 'wondering' questions that challenge people like:
 - a. I wonder what part of this story is about you.
 - b. I wonder what part of this story is most important.
 - c. I wonder what challenges you the most in this story.
8. Invite people to respond in their own way to what God is saying to them. Does God ask for a new commitment? Does God challenge people to do something? Explain the place of the mercy seat and invite people to use the mercy seat as a place for prayer, surrendering or renewal of their commitment.

SCRIPTURE

'He told them another parable: "The Kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.'

- (Matthew 13:31-32 NIV)

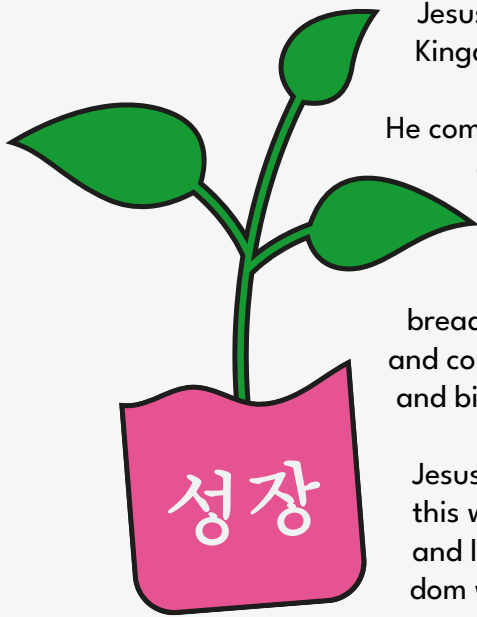
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In the gospel according to Matthew, Jesus tells everyone he comes that the Kingdom is at hand. Matthew usually says 'Kingdom of Heaven', while the other evangelists more often speak of 'Kingdom of God'. Matthew likes to use the Hebrew language; the language that Jews spoke. Jews are not allowed to pronounce the name of God, so they say 'Kingdom of Heaven' instead of 'Kingdom of God'. But it means the same.

Long ago, the Jews were promised that one day the Kingdom would come. Jesus comes with the same message but adds something new: the Kingdom is at hand. Indeed, it is already here now!

Jesus uses several images to explain exactly what the Kingdom is like.

He compares it to a mustard seed you put in the ground. It's a small seed and you don't see the plant that comes out of it yet, but it will grow into a huge plant.



Jesus uses several images to explain exactly what the Kingdom is like.

He compares it to a mustard seed you put in the ground. It's a small seed and you don't see the plant that comes out of it yet, but it will grow into a huge plant. He also compares the Kingdom to leaven. That is a kind of yeast that is in bread dough that makes the bread rise. In the beginning, the bread dough is still small and compact, but because of the leaven, it will grow bigger and bigger.

Jesus means by this that the Kingdom is already present in this world, just like the plant in the insignificant, small seed and like the leaven in bread dough. Eventually, the Kingdom will grow or rise into something unimaginably great.

The parable wants to give us courage. ***However insignificant and hidden the Kingdom may seem, it will break through in all-surpassing power!***

QUESTIONS

There are a few questions in this story. Maybe you could leave the congregation with a few questions they can think about.

Here are some suggestions. You can also find some suggestions in the sermon example.

Now I wonder ...

- ... *who is The Sower in this story?*
- ... *who are the birds in this story?*
- ... *whether they were happy to find the tree?*
- ... *what the nests really might be?*



SERMON EXAMPLE

(Matthew 13:31-32)

You may want to use this sermon as an example and inspiration for your own sermon.

INTRODUCTION

Hallelujah!



Have you ever heard of or seen a mustard seed? (Maybe show a mustard seed on your finger.) Mustard seeds are so small and light that it takes 725 to 726 to weigh just 1 gram.

Their size is only 0.5 to 1 mm. What do you think will happen to such a small mustard seed later? (Listen to what children think).

Mustard seeds are used in the Bible a couple of times as a symbol for very small things and, here it is used as a picture of God's Kingdom; the new world as God intended it to be. Why would that be?

Let's read verse 31 together.

'He told them another parable: "The Kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches.'

How can the smallest seed in the world be like the Kingdom of God?
Let's find out the secret through God's Word.

SIZE OF THE SEED

So, why did Jesus compare the Kingdom of God to a mustard seed? First, this is because the beginning of the Kingdom of God is just like the smallest mustard seed. Just like this mustard seed, it starts small and insignificant.

Look at the seeds. They are tiny enough to vanish quickly with even a gentle touch or breeze.

THE POTENTIAL OF THE SEED

In Jesus' time, the mustard plant was generally considered healthy, like a medicine. Farmers nowadays know it's good for the soil. It makes the soil better and stops weeds from growing. A couple of things you might not know:



Extracts of the plant are used in toothbrushes because they can prevent plaque.

Mustard fruits and seeds contain vitamins A and C, calcium, iron, potassium, magnesium and selenium. It helps fight blood disorders, headaches, rheumatism and asthma.

These tiny seeds contain a lot of vitality that can heal and restore. One of the most amazing stories in the Bible is about the death and resurrection of Jesus. It was God's holy power that enabled Jesus to rise again after his death, showing that God's Holy Spirit is stronger than any darkness. The Kingdom has the same vitality, because of God's holy power, working in and through people.

Are you aware of God's holy power in you? You can love people, like Jesus. You can share meals with people, just like Jesus. You can share The Good News about the Kingdom of God, just like Jesus. You have Kingdom potential!

THE RESULT OF THE SEED

One of the people who lived in Jesus' time 2000-something years ago is Pliny the Elder. Pliny was a soldier, a veteran, a scholar, and an amateur scientist who loved plants. He wrote the following about the mustard plant.

Mustard... With its pungent taste and fiery effect is extremely beneficial for health. It grows entirely wild, though it is improved by being transplanted: but on the other hand, when it has once been sown it is scarcely possible to get the place free of it, as the seed when it falls germinates at once.

The mustard plant is an unstoppable plant; it will grow everywhere! Just like the Kingdom of God. It will grow into a new world where God's love will rule. It will create safe spaces for people who need a place of rest or a hiding place, just like the birds. It will create space for tiny, little children and old people. It will include space for poor and rich people, from every tribe, race, and colour. A part of this Kingdom is already visible; for example, in the lives of children who are in a safe space because of the Salvation Army home that now looks after them. Or when you look at children who learn to write and start to flourish because of the after-school program in a corps of the Salvation Army. You can even see it in a simple smile; bringing light into the lives of others.

We may seem small and weak, but with God's holy power, we can grow beautifully. God's spirit still uses the small and insignificant, to grow an unstoppable new world of justice, peace, and love.

Who are you in this story?

Do you feel small and tiny, like a mustard seed?

Do you feel like a bird, who needs a place to shelter and rest?

Maybe you are one of those wild leaves and branches, providing shelter.

This story invites you to be part of that wild, unstoppable force in this world.

A force of love and grace where the vulnerable take shelter against the harshness of the world. The only thing you have to do is to say 'yes' to God and allow his spirit to grow your love for God, others, and yourself.

