

## Faith Of a Mustard Seed

Imagine driving down the road in the late spring and passing a large farm. The fields have been tilled and are waiting to be planted in. These fields are many times the size of a football field and seem to stretch on without end. Now imagine, in the middle of these fields, standing there is Jesus and in his hand is a tiny mustard seed. That mustard seed represents your church. Jesus gently plants this seed and gives one simple instruction, “grow”.

As with many small churches throughout our country, I think we sometimes misunderstand this instruction. We look at the size of our church, the size of our congregation and the number of our ministries and feel that each one of these must increase in number each and every year. We fall into the trap that if we aren't seeing that numerical growth, it must mean that we are failing in our duties, activities and faith. We are convinced that something must be wrong with our church, but let me offer a different perspective.

That simple instruction to “grow” does not necessarily have to do with the numerical size of our churches or any other measurable point. We are to grow in our knowledge, love and understanding of Jesus. We are being instructed to spend time through prayer, studying, fasting, and worshipping to draw closer to God. This applies to each one of us as individuals and to the church as a whole. Churches regardless of size, absolutely need to focus on our relationship with God and allow God to guide the church. If your church is meant to be filled to the rafters with people, God will make sure of that.

Continuing with the analogy, as our seed/church grows, we break through the top of the soil and begin to spread our branches and leaves. For the first time, we get a look around at this field. A sense of impossibility can overtake us. “How is my church supposed to fill this entire field? No matter how large it grows, it can't fill this whole area.” We see the challenges all around us, beyond our borders and we can feel overwhelmed. “How is my church, of not quite 20, going to help with all of this?” Let me refer to a simple but an often-repeated phrase in the Bible, “Fear not!”

Again, the instruction given to us was to “grow”. We weren't told to fill the entire field or solve all the problems in the field. You see, that while Jesus was planting our seed, he was also planting seeds in front of and behind us. Seeds were planted to our left and right, and we all were given the same instruction, “grow”. Within these fields, mustard plants, or more accurately churches, are popping up. As we are focusing on growing with the Lord, the other churches are doing the same. Before long, the field is filled with plants growing and providing an abundant harvest.

Don't let anyone tell you that just because your church is “small”, that your impact is equally small or that something must be wrong with the church. Focus on the simple instruction to “grow”. We must place our faith in the Lord to direct our church and allow Him to shine through our growth.

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