MARK: The Essence of the Kingdom **4.20.08**

21 And he said to them, "Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket, or under a bed, and not on a stand? 22 For nothing is hidden except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret except to come to light. 23 If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." 24 And he said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear: with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you. 25 For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away." 26 And he said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. 27 He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. 28 The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. 29 But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come." 30 And he said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it. 31 It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, 32 yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade." 33 With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it. 34 He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything. Mark 4:21-34 ESV

"Kingdom of God" Definition :

"The rule and reign of God on earth as it is in heaven." OR *"Where what God wants done is done."*

One Kingdom, Three Pictures (v.21-32) :

1. A lamp on a stand (v. 21-23)

"lamp under basket…stand" "hidden…manifest" Carrying forward last week's idea.

Main Point: The Kingdom is to be proclaimed!

Are we proclaiming the Kingdom?

Transitional "Bridge" Section (v.24-25):

"one who has…one who has not" If you listen to Jesus, He will give you more Truth. If you don't listen, you will lose even the little bit that you have.

2. A man scattering seed on the ground (v.26-29)

Main Point: The growth of the Kingdom is a matter of secrecy, Sovereignty, and surety.

Implications :

1. We are not always going to understand what God is doing (Is. 55:8-9).
   a. This should bring us comfort.

   Am I living well in light of the secrecy in the growth of the Kingdom?

2. We are not *ultimately* responsible for the growth of the Kingdom.
   a. This should never be used as an excuse for our own laziness.

Am I walking in a healthy balance in regard to the Sovereignty and the growth of the Kingdom?

3. We can trust that the Kingdom will come in its fullness someday!
   a. Overarching : Rev. 7 ; Individual : Phil. 1:6, Rom. 8:29-30
   b. This should give us hope!

Am I walking in hope in light of the surety of the growth of the Kingdom (overarching/personal)?

3. A grain of mustard seed that grows (v.30-32)

"mustard seed" Used proverbially.The smallest seed they would have known about. Could actually be a reference to Jesus and the disciples.

"tree" Significant metaphor found throughout Scripture.

"birds could make nests" Picture of its growth. Possible ref. to inclusion of Gentiles.

Main Point: The kingdom will start small & seem insignificant but will grow to unbelievable proportions.

Implications:

1. If Jesus can use the disciples to start the Movement, he can use us.
2. Opportunities that seem insignificant are actually very Kingdom-significant.
   a. This should cultivate commitment and perseverance within us.

Do I recognize the often-ignored potential for the advancement of Kingdom before me every day?

Mom's? Dad's? Singles? Too Young? Too Old?

What are the unique opportunities God has allowed us because of my age and stage?

All of Us :

Church Gathered: Set-up/Teardown, Hospitality, Giving, Little Groups, Music, Prayer, New Opps. with St. Matt's and beyond, etc.

Church Scattered: Sharing the Gospel, Groups, Mercy Ministries, Our Neighborhoods, Our Jobs, Opportunities are Endless!

Do Our Lives Reflect the Essence of the Kingdom?

Our relationships. Our work. Our parenting. Our finances. All of who we are.

Summary Statement of Jesus' Teaching (v.33-34):

Visit www.crossinglouisville.com for more helpful resources, including study guides on Mark.

Works Consulted : Expositor's Bible Commentary, Life Application Bible, MacArthur Study Bible, Messages by Steve Hart, The Gospel According to Mark by James Edwards, Messages by Tim Keller