Matthew 13:31-32 / Mark 4:30-32

- Jesus tells this parable shortly before John the Baptist is beheaded. Jesus is still in Judea near Bethlehem when he is telling these parables to the crowds and his disciples.

- Mathew and Mark have a telling of this parable in their gospels. Matthew’s telling is shorter than Mark’s. However Mathew does quote mark in part of his telling of the parable. This has implication that Matthew’s gospel was written after Mark’s.

- Mathew and Mark do have a different ordering of the parables Jesus told at the time. Mathew starts out with the telling of the parable of the soils and then gives the explanation of that parable. Next comes the parable of the tears, mustard seed, yeast and finally the explanation of the tears. Mark starts with the parable of the soils then the explanation, next is the parable of the growing seeds then the mustard seed. He leaves out the parable of the yeast and the tears and the explanation.

- The first two parables, the parable of the soils and the tears, have a theme that many will hear the gospel but not all will accept it. But in the parable of the
mustard seed and yeast. It would appear that all receive the gospel (Lewis, Booth 335-337).

- The phrase “a tree where birds would rest in its branches” was a common phrase that would refer to a great kingdom (references in Daniel). Also the phrase “birds of heaven” had meaning among the rabbinic parables referring to the gentile nations (Hill 233).

- The message of this parable is as Jesus says is about the kingdom of God. The mustard seed was one of the smallest seeds in Palestine but it grew to be the largest. Jesus was teaching that the kingdom of God was like the mustard seed in that it was very small at the time but over time it would grow to be the greatest of all. People would come and find rest or “tent” in its branches. It was the outward sign of the Kingdom of God (Mounce 131, Hendricksen 567).

- There is a lot we can learn from this parable. The kingdom of heaven is bigger than what we see or can understand. In our present circumstances we often get discouraged over the ministry we are apart of because the people we are ministering to are not maturing or “getting” what we are trying to teach them. Or ministry is not going as planned. Or even our staff is making ministry difficult. But if we remember that the Kingdom of God is bigger than us and that it is more than what we are experiencing we can move on finding confidence and hope in our work for the Kingdom of God.

Comment [SM2]: You’ve been taken in by the hyperbole.

Comment [SM3]: we are
Bibliography


- There are too many indications that you failed to proofread your work.
- This seems to have been hastily done, poorly researched and thought through.
- Grade: C+