

It's the Dirt  
A Sermon by David Bennett  
June 10, 2009  
Mark 4:26-34

Jesus clearly loved teaching in parables, loved telling stories. Parables (or stories) show how important our imaginations are. Our story teller last week tickled our imaginations with fables and tales. And we learned new and wonderful things.

The same is true in Jesus' telling of stories. His stories remind us to keep our imaginations open and alive; remind us that there is mystery beyond our everyday understanding of what seems so ordinary.

Jesus' stories help us discover God's power and presence in new and wonderful ways in the midst of the ordinary of everyday life.

So it is that "someone" – perhaps some of us – went out to sow seeds. We scattered

them everywhere. When our seed bag was empty we headed to our back porch to watch the sun set, enjoyed dinner and a good night sleep and woke up in the morning to discover that the seeds had sprouted. Sprouted without any help from us. Sprouted with us surprised at how this could have ever have happened.

My friends, it's the dirt. The dirt is God's kingdom, God's kindom, if you will – the place where God is stirring and growing and nurturing and bringing life.

We may do the scattering. But God does the life-giving.

Listen carefully to Jesus' story. Jesus tells us it is the Kingdom of *God* where all this happens. It is not the Kingdom of *Dave or kingdom of ...or kingdom of ...*It is the Kingdom of *God*.

It is through God's power, through God's presence that new life is birthed. It is through God's power, through God's presence that growth in the spirit swirls into being within and among us.

To make sure every one gets the point Jesus tells another parable. Jesus seems to understand that we are a little slow to figure out what he wants us to learn.

Jesus' second story is about the smallest of seeds. The mustard seed was a common metaphor throughout Palestine for the "smallest thing".

I don't want to attack anyone's self esteem, or destroy anyone's strong sense of self – but let's imagine ourselves as the tiniest of seed, a scruffy seed, as ragged folks, full of doubt, full of fears, not quite getting all Jesus is hoping we get (just like Jesus' first followers) – and Jesus tells us, as he told his

first followers, once you are sown into the dirt (sown into the kingdom of God) you will grow to be strong, big, alive, nurturing, supportive, comforting.

Oh, now we get it. We're tiny, we're little, we're nothing, we're seemingly dead. And the Kingdom of God, which is the nurturing, loving dirt into which we are sown, births all this new life within us. The dirt is where we discover life, is where we are given life.

So there we have it. Two stories about God's Kingdom. We are scatterers of seed. We are scattered seed. Scatterers or scattered – we find life in the dirt, the rich soil that is the love, grace, forgiveness, hope, new life that is God's power, God's presence discovered in the kingdom of God.