

## A Picture Of The Kingdom

Luke 13:18

18Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it?

19It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.

20And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God?

21It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

There was a certain old recluse who lived deep in the mountains of Colorado. When he died, distant relatives came from the city to collect his valuables. Upon arriving, all they saw was an old shack with an outhouse beside it. Inside the shack, next to the rock fireplace was an old cooking pot and his mining equipment. A cracked table with a three-legged chair stood guard by a tiny window, and a kerosene lamp served as the centerpiece for the table. In a dark corner of the little room was a dilapidated cot with a threadbare bedroll on it.

They picked up some of the old relics and started to leave. As they were driving away, an old friend of the recluse, on his mule, flagged them down. "Do you mind if I help myself to what's left in my friend's cabin?" he asked. "Go right ahead," they replied. After all, they thought, what inside that shack could be worth anything?

The old friend entered the shack and walked directly over the table. He reached

under it and lifted one of the floorboards. He then proceeded to take out all the gold his friend had discovered over the past 53 years – enough to build a palace. The recluse died with only his friend knowing his true worth. As the friend looked out of the little window and watched the cloud of dust behind the relative's car disappear, he said, "They should have got to know him better.

I wonder, as we watch the Lamb, Jesus Christ, who suffered and died a criminal's death 2000 years ago, that we too have missed out on the gold.

Do we know our Friend's (Jesus) true worth? Do we treat Him as if He's some old relic of history that lived somewhere in strife-torn Middle East long, long time ago in a galaxy far, far way?

What's that gotta do with me? Yeah, sure He died, and maybe He's some tragic hero and we drive away, walk away empty from this assembly this day or do we want to walk out here with the gold?

Have we missed the gold? Will someone, one-day say of us that we should have got to know Jesus better? Will someone say they never grew in Christ?

1 Peter 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

Psalms. 92:12

12 The [uncompromisingly] righteous shall flourish like the palm tree [be long-lived, stately, upright, useful, and fruitful]; they shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon [majestic, stable, durable, and incorruptible].

13 Planted in the house of the Lord, they shall flourish in the courts of our God.

14 [Growing in grace] they shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be full of sap [of spiritual vitality] and [rich in the] verdure [of trust, love, and contentment].

15[They are living memorials] to show that the Lord is upright and faithful to His promises; He is my Rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

## 1. Grace And Knowledge

2 Peter 3:18

18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

We can grow under the love of God. When we mess up He gives us grace to try again...

## 2. Faith

2 Thessalonians 1:3

3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;

Matthew 17:20

And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

## 3. All Things

Ephesians 4:15

15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

#### 4. Don't Worry About What Others Are Doing.

Matthew 13:24

24 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?

28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

Deuteronomy 6:5

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart,  
and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

Ecclesiastes 9:10

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

Bertoldo de Giovanni is a name even the most enthusiastic lover of art is unlikely to recognize. He was the pupil of Donatello, the greatest sculptor of his time, and he was the teacher of Michelangelo, the greatest sculptor of all time.

Michelangelo was only 14 years old when he came to Bertoldo, but it was already obvious that he was enormously gifted.

Bertoldo was wise enough to realize that gifted people are often tempted to coast rather than to grow, and therefore he kept trying to pressure his young prodigy to work seriously at his art.

One day he came into the studio to find Michelangelo toying with a piece of sculpture far beneath his abilities. Bertoldo grabbed a hammer, stomped across the room, and smashed the work into tiny pieces, shouting this unforgettable message, "Michelangelo, talent is cheap; dedication is costly!"

Don't let talent fool you into thinking that talent equals salvation.

Growth is a must!

**Matthew 21:19**

**And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away.**

On the Australian coat of arms is a picture of an emu and a kangaroo. These animals were chosen because they share a characteristic that appealed to our forefathers.

Both the emu and kangaroo can move only forward, not back. The emu's three-toed foot causes it to fall if it tries to go backwards, and the kangaroo is prevented from moving in reverse by its large tail.

Those who truly choose to follow Jesus become like the emu and kangaroo, moving only forward, never back

Luke 9:62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

When you grow in Christ your understanding of Him will grow. When you truly know Him you will find that His love, grace, and peace is beyond understanding.