

The parables in our gospel reading today tell us that the Kingdom of God is now. Our Lord's parables point to God's universe and his reign and tell us what it is like. They also suggest our role in the Kingdom. Parables seem like strange stories. Sometimes people try to treat them as allegories and attach meanings to the various parts, but we should think of the parables more as windows showing us a glimpse of the Kingdom, stirring us to hope and anticipation that we can join in the Kingdom and become players in God's world, instruments of God's work. The parables let us know, tease us, if you will, into knowing that God has a plan, that God is intentional in his actions, and our place is in being fully a part, being a significant piece of God's plan.

Today, we have parables based on seed. The parables are different, but both make their point with the image of seed. The parable of the inattentive planter tells us that even though not much effort went into the sowing, what came out was grand – not because of the skill and talent of the planter, but because of the Author of Life. Likewise the mustard seed; that which was insignificant on the surface became the greatest of shrubs – because the Author of Life gave it life and gave it his intent. When God does something, he has a purpose and he has a purpose for us. That purpose is to be players in his Kingdom, instruments of his work. If we elect to play on God's team, letting him be our coach, then we, too will do grand things, not for ourselves and not because of ourselves and our talents, but because God has a purpose for us, and in him we will go far beyond anything that we can imagine as we fill the place he has for us in this world. The point is we have to let God be the coach, we have to let God call the plays; in other words, we must do God's will, not our own, otherwise, we can really mess things up. The Kingdom of God is God's Kingdom – not ours. Life, even our own lives, must be about God and not us, if we are to ever reach the goal God has for us, and that is full participation in his Kingdom as one of his chosen.

We scatter the seed on the ground, Jesus said, but God gives it life and growth and prepares it for the harvest, not us. We can mess it up, if we like, by taking charge, or maybe we might just help a little if our intent is good and we work hard, but the growth comes not from us but from God. The parables invite us to let God work in us and take us where he wills. The parables tell us to let God take control of our lives and mold us into that which he intends for us to be. If we do this, the harvest will be plentiful and good, and God's world will be better because we have lived to God's glory. *Amen*