

Small Seeds 2nd Sunday after Trinity 13/06/21

It has been quite a strange week for Bob and me! as many of you know, we have our permanent home in Hinckley, that is leased out. The tenancy changed in March from great tenants to tenants who decided to turn our home into a cannabis farm! On Wednesday, the Police returned our keys to us after their investigations finished. No weed had been grown, they were stopped in time, but the house is a wreck. And today, I am preaching and the readings are all about growing plants from seed. If anyone ever doubted that God has a sense of humour, I assure you He has!

To be fair it has been a bit gutting, and I suppose I asked the question, why us? We always think that don't we, when something bad happens – why me? why us? But then I thought, why not us? We Christians are not here to be beaten down by the world, but to grow the Christian kingdom, to influence the world by how we respond to difficulty, and how we live and love. We can be witnesses by showing how we rely on God to help us, and to demonstrate how much we love Him. So if we can pass on the smallest bit of love and faith,

through how we deal with adversity, just like a seed once planted, it can grow.

Green season is all about growth, both as individuals, and together as the kingdom of God. When God tries us and tests us, it is for our own growth in faith, and so I guess he sent this test to get me stronger. And I do know that when things go wrong in my life, that is when I need God the most and that is when I pray the most too! But, in certain situations, we can seem so helpless, and so insignificant, so I am glad the readings today are so encouraging.

Ezekiel shows us that God can often make something small and insignificant, the very thing God uses to strengthen us. God can 'take a tiny little sprig from the top of a lofty cedar' and replant it to 'become a noble cedar'. This cedar then becomes a shelter and many other types of life can flourish in and under its branches. We are just tiny sprigs, taken from God's vine, but God can and will help us grow into something useful for Him. I think the thing we need to remember is that cedar trees take a very long time to grow to maturity, whereas the mustard seed is a fast growing plant

that can provide shade in much less time. God's purpose for us may seem to be taking forever, but He does know what He is doing, we just need to be patient in faith.

There is a post I found really useful on Facebook where Jesus says I am Divine and you are Debranches! We grow from him and he sustains us.

We can often wonder what we are actually doing for God, but God uses the small things in life, the little efforts, the tiny kindnesses, the quick prayer. Take the mustard seed story - In the days of Jesus, the mustard tree was regarded as a weed, spreading everywhere, out of control, housing birds in cultivated areas that were unwanted and regarded as pests – not perfect, not at all – and yet used as a symbol of the Kingdom to encourage us, who are not perfect, to grow and to be who we are. To reach out our branches to take in the stranger perhaps, or to give shelter and protection to those who are different, all in all, maybe to be a bit more simple in our approach to spreading the Gospel?

Jesus never quite makes his parables clear, but then that is half the fun of belonging to Him – just as the mustard plant tends to take over where it is not

wanted, Jesus said that was what the Kingdom of God was like: not just like the mighty cedar, but more like a creeper, or a vine that will grow and give. So, our life in Jesus isn't necessarily going to be tidy and orderly, but is definitely transforming us into who he wants us to be.

And in case we fall into the trap of thinking that we can get too old and outlive our usefulness, we read in the psalm that in old age we still produce fruit; and are always green and full of sap which is very encouraging when you have to refurbish a house!

2 Corinthians reminds us that 'we walk by faith, not by sight'. We are reminded that we are new creations – we really do have chances to begin again, fresh and green, to grow and to help others to grow with us. When we face difficulty or realise we have limitations, God encourages us to move beyond them in faith.

Small seeds. Whether cannabis or not, everything has to start somewhere, and faith is no different. Small kindnesses, like creeping weeds, reaching out, even where they may not be appreciated, help us to grow, whether slowly or quickly, in God's time to grow God's Kingdom. Amen.