



Wednesday Prayer

9th Sunday after Pentecost – Grow Strong Roots

And he put before them another parable: “The Kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of seeds, but when it has grown, it is the largest of shrubs and becomes a tree so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

Matthew 13:31-32

The parable of the mustard seed as a metaphor for the Kingdom of Heaven is known by most Christians of all ages, even those with the most minimal of exposure to Bible study. The comparison of the size of the seed to the shrub produced is impressive and leaves an imprint in the brain of how the small acts we do are used by God to make big differences. It’s a great lesson, and a concept that even young children can grasp.

But the mustard plant has other attributes that lend themselves for use as a metaphor of the Kingdom of heaven. For one thing, mustard seeds quickly grow very long tap roots that make it resilient to drought and allow it to grow quickly to seed. Because of this, it becomes something of a pest, coming back year after year, both in the wild and in annual crop rotation. But in so doing, recent research shows that it improves water quality, prevents weeds, and attracts beneficial insects.

So be a mustard seed in God’s messy garden. Grow your roots long and strong by nurturing your own faith. Grow strong roots in this work to prevent exploitation and trafficking by doing your research about current trends and learning what is true and what is myth. And keep in mind that being a pest isn’t always a bad thing! Be a pest and continue reminding your community of the prevalence of sex trafficking and how to prevent it. Reach out to those most vulnerable to exploitation or sex traffickers, those whose physical and emotional needs might not be met, new immigrants, those who don’t have healthy families and others. Nurture strength and resilience in them and be strong and resilient yourself in countering the myths about sex trafficking in our popular culture. The latest movie or the “warnings” that spread on social media about trafficking may not be truths and can actually harm efforts to end trafficking. Reach out to partner organizations in your community and join efforts and strengthen networks to prevent and end human trafficking. And, of course, as in all that we do, God will use even our smallest efforts to make big differences in our world.

Hear our prayers, oh God, that in our fragile humanity, we may grow strong and resilient in faith and service to all of our neighbors, especially to those who are vulnerable to or are held in bondage to sex trafficking. Amen.

Written by Kay Kinkel, MSW, LICSW, a Behavioral Health Professional with LSS and a member of the Cherish All Children Advisory Board.