

Explore the Theme — “An Infinite Potential for Being”

pod-cast of a 12-minute sermon by the Rev. Matthew Wright on Matthew 13:31-32

for other “Explore the Theme” postings visit: <https://www.shcj.org/explore-the-theme>



LISTEN: to MUSTARD, BIRDS AND BRANCHES — *Sermons from St. Gregory's* by the Rev. Matthew Wright, Episcopal priest at St. Gregory's Episcopal Church in Woodstock, NY — <https://soundcloud.com/stgregoryssermons/mustard-birds-and-branches>

Is mustard a plant, a bush, or a tree?



“The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed which, when sown upon the ground is one of the smallest seeds on earth ... the kingdom that Jesus says lies within us and all around us is like a mustard seed that seems to be nothing and yet within it there is an infinite potential for being, for unfolding, and for embrace. It puts forth branches so that the birds of the air can nest in its shade.”



Seeds are used across the great sacred traditions to speak of the potential that lies within human beings, something that starts out small and seemingly insignificant but that contains within it the full truth and possibility of who we really are, the potential to become truly human beings. And the differences between these two possibilities within us is as vast as the difference between a mustard seed and a tree with branches that can hold all the birds of the air.



SING: “You Have Called Us by Our Name” —

words & music by Bernadette Farrell; vocals

by Clare Cobb; music arranged & played by Peter Cobb, Preston, UK — <https://www.shcj.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/You-Have-Called-Us-By-Our-Name.mp3>;

4th verse (below):

***“You will nourish, you will lead,
giving every gift we need,
For your reign will be established
from the smallest of all seeds.”***

And here Jesus does some classic Jesus, he exaggerates. Mustard is not actually a tree and yet in Jesus’ parable he has this mustard shrub put forth



great branches, and in Matthew’s and Luke’s version of this parable they actually explicitly add that it becomes a tree. Mustard doesn’t do that. So Jesus is really emphasizing the seeming discontinuity between what we think the seed is and what it’s capable of. Between what the world tells us we are and what it can actually become.” Matthew Wright