

**Read: Mark 4:26-34**

## The Power of God's Word

### **Mark 4:31-32**

It [the kingdom of God] is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Look at your fingernail. Not from the top, but from the side. See how thin it is? Maybe one millimeter? That's about the size of a mustard seed. Now think about the tallest giraffe at the zoo. A mustard seed grows into a tree that's even taller than that giraffe.

So when Jesus was talking about the kingdom of God growing, he was using the tiniest thing people back then might plant—and they'd know how amazing it was that such a small thing could grow into an enormous tree.

The problem is . . . a mustard seed doesn't grow on its own. A seed can't just tell itself "Hey, grow!" That's not how trees and plants work. Everything that grows needs soil and sun and water too.

Your faith is like a mustard seed. It can't grow on its own. It needs to be planted to grow. It needs God's words (you find those words in the Bible) and friends, family, teachers, and pastors. The Holy Spirit (who is God) takes the words you read and the words people speak to you to plant your faith and to help it grow. He helps you know that Jesus is the only way to heaven. He helps you understand what you're hearing and put it into practice. He helps you be kind, patient, gentle. He encourages you to use self-control and persevere when things are hard. Through his work, your faith—which might seem so small at first—grows big and strong.

What's hard is that while the Bible tells us our faith can be HUGE, it doesn't always feel that way. Sometimes it feels like faith shrinks back to the size of the seed. We aren't always patient, kind, or good. We don't always control the words that come out of our mouth, sometimes we don't even control our hands and use them to hurt others. Sometimes we just want to stop doing the right thing and do what we feel like doing, not what God says is the good path to take.

Honestly, that's going to happen because we are human and sinful. We do things that don't make God happy. But there's good news too. In another passage in the Bible Jesus said, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you."

See, none of this is actually about the size of the seed or the size of the plant. It's all about the size of your God and the power of his words to make you grow.

God's the one who makes things grow.

*The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.*

### **Questions for the Younger Children**

- Have you ever planted seeds for a garden or for flowers?
- God's Word helps plant seeds of faith in our hearts. Do you have a favorite passage or song that tells you God's words?

### **Questions for Elementary Age Children**

- Have you ever planted seeds for a garden or for flowers? If so, what's your favorite thing to grow? Name two things that help our faith grow. (devotions, worship, text Bible passages, etc.)
- If God's Word helps plant faith seeds in our hearts, what time should we set aside for devotions: in the morning or before bed?

### **Questions for Middle School and Above**

- Tell me about a time when your faith seemed big.
- Name a person in your life with a "big" faith. Think about what they did to help it grow.

### **Closing Prayer:**

Dear Holy Spirit, thank you for working through the words of the Bible to help my faith grow. Thank you for giving me family and friends who share those words. Thank you for planting faith in my heart and helping it grow. Amen.

### **Hymn: CW 405:1,3 – Oh, for a Faith that Will Not Shrink**

Oh, for a faith that will not shrink  
Though pressed by many a foe,  
That will not tremble on the brink  
Of poverty or woe,

A faith that shines more bright and clear  
When tempests rage without,  
That, when in danger, knows no fear,  
In darkness feels no doubt,