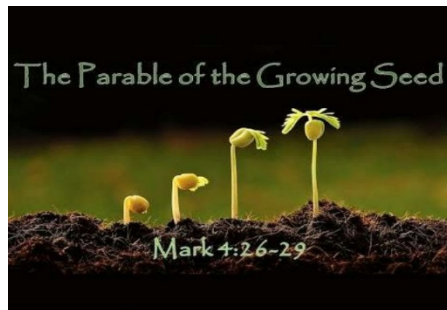




Week 1

These weekly studies are loosely based on the previous Sunday's sermon. If you missed it, you will find a recording on our website (www.knaphillbaptist.org.uk). They are designed for both Home Group discussion and/or personal reflection. Don't necessarily try to cover all the questions and discussion topics in your group at one sitting. You may like to think about them later in your own time.

...The Growing Seed



Read Mark 4:26-29

This is first of a new series on The Kingdom of God. This will run through the Easter season up to Pentecost and beyond. Having looked at the evidences for the Resurrection, we now look at the 'why'. The Kingdom of God (also referred to as The Kingdom of Heaven or The Kingdom of the Son of Man) was the principle theme of Jesus' teaching. When he began his Ministry in Galilee he proclaimed the Good News of God (the Gospel). 'The time has come,' he said. 'The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe good news' (Mark 1:15). If this is what Jesus primarily came to tell us, then we need to learn all we can about his Kingdom.

Questions and pointers for discussion/reflection

1. To tell us what the Kingdom of God is like, Jesus mainly used parables – earthly stories with a heavenly meaning – often using illustrations of ordinary everyday life as spiritual metaphors. This was Jesus prepared teaching method and he is the master of it. Think about some well-known parables. How many can you think of? Is this an appropriate and relevant way to communicate the truths of Scripture today?
2. There are several that refer to seed such as The Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-23), The Parable of the Weeds (Matthew 13:24-30,36-43) and The Parable of the Growing Seed (Mark 4:26-29). As explained in these parables, the seed is the Word of God (see 1 Peter 1:23) and the soil is a person's heart. Have a look at the different soils mentioned in The Parable of the Sower. What can we learn from this? What is the soil of your heart like? How can we go from yielding a crop thirty times what was sown to sixty or a hundred times? What is your response to the Parable of the Weeds especially the explanation in verses 36–43?
3. In Matthew 13:24 and Mark 4:26, Jesus introduces each parable with the words The Kingdom of God is like... This phrase introduces many of Jesus' parables. What is he referring to? What is your understanding of the meaning of The Kingdom of God?
See Romans 14:17; John 18:36; Revelation 11:15; Luke 22:29,30.
4. Jesus said, 'The Kingdom of God is within you' (Luke 17:20-21) Discuss. Leo Tolstoy used this Scripture as a title for a book on Christian Anarchism. Richard Rohr (popular preacher and author) wrote of the Kingdom of God as a 'New World Order' whose plan is based on the Sermon on the Mount and that this 'Reign of God' is at the heart of the New Testament. Is the Kingdom of God a new world order? Does that make us Christian anarchists?
5. What is the key point that Jesus is making about the Kingdom of God in The Parable of the Growing Seed? See also Romans 1:16 and 1 Corinthians 3:5-7.

The Kingdom came with Jesus, the King of the Kingdom. This Kingdom of the age to come was inaugurated through his death and resurrection but is yet to come in all its fullness. It is described as 'the now and the not yet of the Kingdom.' But like a seed growing in the ground because it contains the life force of God, so is God's Kingdom advancing, growing, increasing, unstoppable!