

# **The Gospel According to Mark**

## **Jesus. Servant. Master.**

### **Lesson 17**

#### **Read Mark 4:30 – 34**

**Introduction:** *“After teaching encouragingly about the kingdom, Jesus ends with a warning that the kingdom is like a mustard seed that grows to the point that birds lodge within its branches. Due to the fact nowhere in the world now or historically has a mustard seed ever grown a tree big enough to support birds and their nests, I believe Jesus is saying that as the kingdom grows, it will expand unnaturally in its organization and structure; that it will become bigger than it was ever intended to be, that birds – the Biblical symbol of evil – lodge therein. We see this in so many systems throughout church history, as complexity replaced simplicity and hierarchy swallowed liberty.”*

Pastor Jon Courson

1. Jesus used the illustration of a “mustard seed” to describe the kingdom of God. What is your understanding of this story Jesus told in Mark 4:30 – 32 as it relates to the kingdom of God?
  - According to Mark 4:33 – 34 what did Jesus do when He was alone with His disciples?

2. The mustard seed Christ used for comparison had also been used to speak of our faith. What do we learn about faith from Matthew 17:14 – 21?

3. God has a way of using small things for big purposes. Little is much when God is in it. How is this illustrated in the following stories?

- 1 Kings 18:44 – 46

- Judges 6:12 – 16. What did God do to Gideon's army in Judges chapter 7?

- John 6:1 – 14

- Mark 12:41 – 44

4. According to Mark 4:4 and Mark 4:15 “*birds*” are compared to Satan. How would this relate to Mark 4:32 if we look at the church as the Kingdom of God on earth spreading the gospel of grace? What happen in church history as the church grew?