

June 13, 2021, the Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year B)
How It All Begins

Mark 4:26-34

²⁶Jesus also said, “The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, ²⁷and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. ²⁸The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. ²⁹But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.”

³⁰He also said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? ³¹It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; ³²yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”

³³With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; ³⁴he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God

You who may have watched the *Big Bang Theory* know how it all began. “The whole universe was in a hot dense state” When an upstart Sunday school student asked what God was up to before he created the universe the tired teacher replied – “Creating a place of eternal punishment for people who ask questions like that.” Science starts head scratching once things get back close to the beginning. In faith we can affirm that whatever was done, God did it. It’s marvelous to live in a time when we approach insights into how God did it. While science and religion have often been at odds they must coalesce because we live in the product of God’s creating.

We have come to know that all we can observe came from a very small beginning. The analogy of a seed is helpful. In that mustard seed lies all the information necessary to make a mature plant. That plant can produce seeds with information for new plants. The language of plants is shared with all of us in what might be considered the Word of God incarnate. When God began creating we are told it was with a word. The Word went out and unlike human speech the word didn’t just change minds it changed reality. In Jewish folklore there are tales of wizards who tried to discover the

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word God spoke to create. The very name by which God introduced himself to Moses was considered so unique and powerful that it was not to be pronounced by us sinful humans. This tradition was known to the Gospel of John that starts, “In the beginning was the Word.” Then goes on to identify the Word with Jesus Christ. It amazes me that long before our science humans understood that that instructions, information, interacts with the material world to bring about new things.

As Jesus was the result of God instructing human flesh we, the church, are a result of God’s instructions creating human community. We were looking at Paul’s letter to the Galatians in bible study recently – our next session will be September 1st – in it Paul defends the freedom Christ has won for us. We are no longer subject to the law but are beholden to the Holy Spirit. The power that frees us makes it possible to engage new programming. We are no longer slaves of the law, but the law is information about how to make a better world. In the weird way God has set up the universe we are products of our DNA, the biological Word, but we are not solely determined by it. Sure we cannot by thinking it change our eye color, skin tone, or hair (including the lack there of, but by our intelligence we introduce information, formulas to divert nature. My Aunt Alice never did a thing to her hair, but according to my mother, her sister, she went from red hair to black and never was there a grey in sight. Truthfully she never did a thing to her hair, her hairdresser did it all.

We are not genetically determined Christians, we are adopted and learn the ways of our new family. Those behaviors do not come naturally, they come by practice until they become second nature. The seed of a new way of being is implanted in us to

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be expressed in our part in the Church, the body of Christ, the incarnation of God's instructions for a better world.

Closing Prayer: Almighty God, we thank you for planting in us the seed of your Word. By your Holy Spirit, help us to receive it with joy, and live according to it, that we may grow in faith and hope and love; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.