

PARABLE OF THE YEAST
MATTHEW 13:33–35
LESSON 7



WELCOME

Have you or someone you know ever cooked something and forgotten an essential ingredient? Describe the result.

BACKGROUND

When looking at a bread recipe that uses yeast, the yeast appears to be a minor ingredient because there are only teaspoons of yeast compared to cups of flour. However, yeast is vital to producing fluffy delicious bread and it does so by permeating the whole loaf. So it is with the Kingdom of God. While it started small, even unnoticeable to some, the Kingdom of God on earth grew dramatically after Jesus' crucifixion, resurrection and ascension and still has a huge impact.



WORD

As you come to the Word, pause and ask God to make it come alive for you.

Context: Jesus continued to talk to the crowd at the lake, illustrating the Kingdom of Heaven through yeast and bread (**Matthew 13:1**). Jesus used yeast to illustrate how something can spread and impact everything around it. In some places in Scripture yeast was used to represent the spread of evil.¹ In this passage, however, Jesus used yeast to represent the spread of His Kingdom and its great impact.

Matthew 13:33–35

³³ *Jesus also used this illustration: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like the yeast a woman used in making bread. Even though she put*

¹ Passages where yeast symbolizes evil or uncleanness: **Matthew 16:5–6, 11–12; Luke 12:1; 1 Corinthians 5:6–8; Galatians 5:9**

only a little yeast in three measures of flour, it permeated every part of the dough.”

³⁴ *Jesus always used stories and illustrations like these when speaking to the crowds. In fact, he never spoke to them without using such parables.* ³⁵ *This fulfilled what God had spoken through the prophet:*

“I will speak to you in parables. I will explain things hidden since the creation of the world.”

1. To what did Jesus compare the Kingdom of Heaven? (**Matthew 13:33**)

2. According to Scripture, what did Jesus always use when speaking to the crowds? (**Matthew 13:34**)
 - a. What is your typical reaction to Jesus’ parables and illustrations? Do you find them easy to understand, difficult to understand, etc.? Do you stop to think about them or move on quickly?

 - b. The prophetic quote Jesus used in **Matthew 13:35** was originally from **Psalms 78:1–4**. In what ways do these verses encourage you in reading Jesus’ parables and illustrations?

*O my people, listen to my instructions.
Open your ears to what I am saying,
for I will speak to you in a parable.
I will teach you hidden lessons from our past—
stories we have heard and known,
stories our ancestors handed down to us.
We will not hide these truths from our children;*

*we will tell the next generation
about the glorious deeds of the LORD,
about his power and his mighty wonders.*

Psalm 78:1–4

- c. Give an example of how you have learned from or been impacted by parables or illustrations, whether in Scripture, stories, messages, podcasts, etc.
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3. In this passage, the Kingdom of Heaven was compared to the dynamic character of yeast. “When yeast is kneaded into the dough, it expands by itself. Rather than being powered by outward armies or organizations, the kingdom of God will grow by an internal dynamic, the Holy Spirit.”² How do the following verses further expand your understanding of the dynamic power of Holy Spirit and how He helps grow and expand the Kingdom of God in you, through you and in the world? Underline what stands out to you.
 - a. **Acts 1:8**
But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

² Radmacher, Earl D., et al. *The Nelson Study Bible: New King James Version*. T. Nelson Publishers, 1997. 1598

b. John 16:8

And when [Holy Spirit] comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment.

c. John 15:26³

But I will send you the Advocate—the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about me.

d. Romans 8:11⁴

The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.

e. Romans 8:26–27

And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will.

4. After Jesus ascended into heaven, the book of Acts records that about 120 of His followers were meeting together. We know today that those original followers grew to a worldwide family of Christ-followers. However, at the time, that massive expansion must have seemed impossible or unthinkable. Although the Kingdom started small, it grew and had a great impact on the world. Look at these verses from the book of Acts and comment on the growth of the Kingdom.

³ “Jesus uses two names for the Holy Spirit—‘Advocate’ and ‘Spirit of Truth.’ The word Advocate conveys the helping, encouraging, and strengthening work of the Spirit. Spirit of truth points to the teaching, illuminating, and reminding work of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit ministers to both the head and the heart, and both dimensions are important.” *Life Application Study Bible: New Living Translation*. Tyndale House Publishers, 2007. 1788

⁴ “The Holy Spirit is God’s promise or guarantee of eternal life for those who believe in him. The Spirit is within us now by faith, and by faith we are certain to live with Christ forever.” *Life Application Study Bible: New Living Translation*. Tyndale House Publishers, 2007. 1908

a. **Acts 2:14, 38–41**

Then Peter stepped forward with the eleven other apostles and shouted to the crowd, “Listen carefully, all of you, fellow Jews and residents of Jerusalem! ... Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise is to you, to your children, and to those far away—all who have been called by the Lord our God.” Then Peter continued preaching for a long time, strongly urging all his listeners, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation!” Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.

b. **Acts 2:44–47**

And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

c. **Acts 8:1, 4–8**

A great wave of persecution began that day,⁵ sweeping over the church in Jerusalem; and all the believers except the apostles were scattered through the regions of Judea and Samaria ... But the believers who were scattered preached the Good News about Jesus wherever they went. Philip, for example, went to the city of Samaria and told the people there about the Messiah. Crowds listened intently to Philip because they

⁵ This persecution began after the stoning and martyrdom of Stephen found in **Acts 7**.

were eager to hear his message and see the miraculous signs he did. Many evil spirits were cast out, screaming as they left their victims. And many who had been paralyzed or lame were healed. So there was great joy in that city.

d. Acts 11:19–21

Meanwhile, the believers who had been scattered during the persecution after Stephen's death traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch of Syria. They preached the word of God, but only to Jews. However, some of the believers who went to Antioch from Cyprus and Cyrene began preaching to the Gentiles about the Lord Jesus. The power of the Lord was with them, and a large number of these Gentiles believed and turned to the Lord.

e. What small things have you seen spread and affect the Kingdom of God in your life or in the world around you?

5. After studying this lesson, how might you explain the parable of the yeast to someone else?

ALLEGIANCE

Relinquishing and surrendering our lives to the King with loyalty to Him alone.

“Sheep among wolves, a tiny seed in the garden, yeast in bread dough, salt in meat: Jesus’ own metaphors of the kingdom describe a kind of ‘secret force’ that works from within. He said nothing of a triumphant church sharing power with the authorities. The kingdom of God appears to work best as a minority movement, in opposition to the kingdom of this world.”⁶

6. What is your response to this idea of the Kingdom working best as a minority movement?

a. In what ways is this a new idea for you?

b. In light of this concept of a minority movement, what are a couple of ways the Kingdom of God is different from the kingdoms of this world?⁷

⁶ Yancey, Philip. *The Jesus I Never Knew*. Zondervan, 2002. 246

⁷ *But Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant.” (Matthew 20:25–26)*

INTEGRATION & MISSION

Putting our intellectual understanding of the Kingdom into practice in every aspect of our lives and living out the Gospel and Kingdom values through faith-filled proclamation and demonstration.

7. As we have previously learned about integration, we understand that there is no separation between the sacred and the secular. We know that God calls us to Kingdom living in every aspect of our lives. What is God calling you to in your life or character that feels bigger than you are able to accomplish? In what way(s) does this feel too big or too difficult?

How could you start with small faith-filled action(s), knowing that God grows small beginnings⁸ as we depend on Holy Spirit?

⁸ When Zerubbabel was called by God to rebuild the Temple after the Babylonian exile, these words of encouragement were given to him: *“Zerubbabel is the one who laid the foundation of this Temple, and he will complete it. ... Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin.”* (**Zechariah 4:9–10**) *“Get to work, for I am with you ... My Spirit remains among you.”* (**Haggai 2:4–5**)



WORSHIP

Take a moment to enter into a time of worship—both on your own and with your community—to show praise, adoration and love for God.

As citizens of the Kingdom, we all have stories to tell. “The kingdom of God is more than a theological concept or a distant reality. We experience the kingdom whenever and wherever God’s redemptive reign overcomes our sinful resistance. It is present in the daily challenges and joys of life, as well as those miraculous moments [and events] that leave us awestruck. And the evidence of God’s kingdom is that it brings transformation to all of life, including the mundane.”⁹

Recall a Kingdom growth or transformation story you have experienced or observed and take the time to give thanks to the King.

CONVERSATION PROMPTS

Consider using one of the conversation prompts this week to begin having a spiritual conversation with someone in your life.

- Where in your life or in the world have you seen things start small and grow to change society?
- Are there any movements in the world that have grabbed your attention and inspire you?
- What kinds of movements do you consider yourself a part of?

TAKE-AWAY SUMMARY

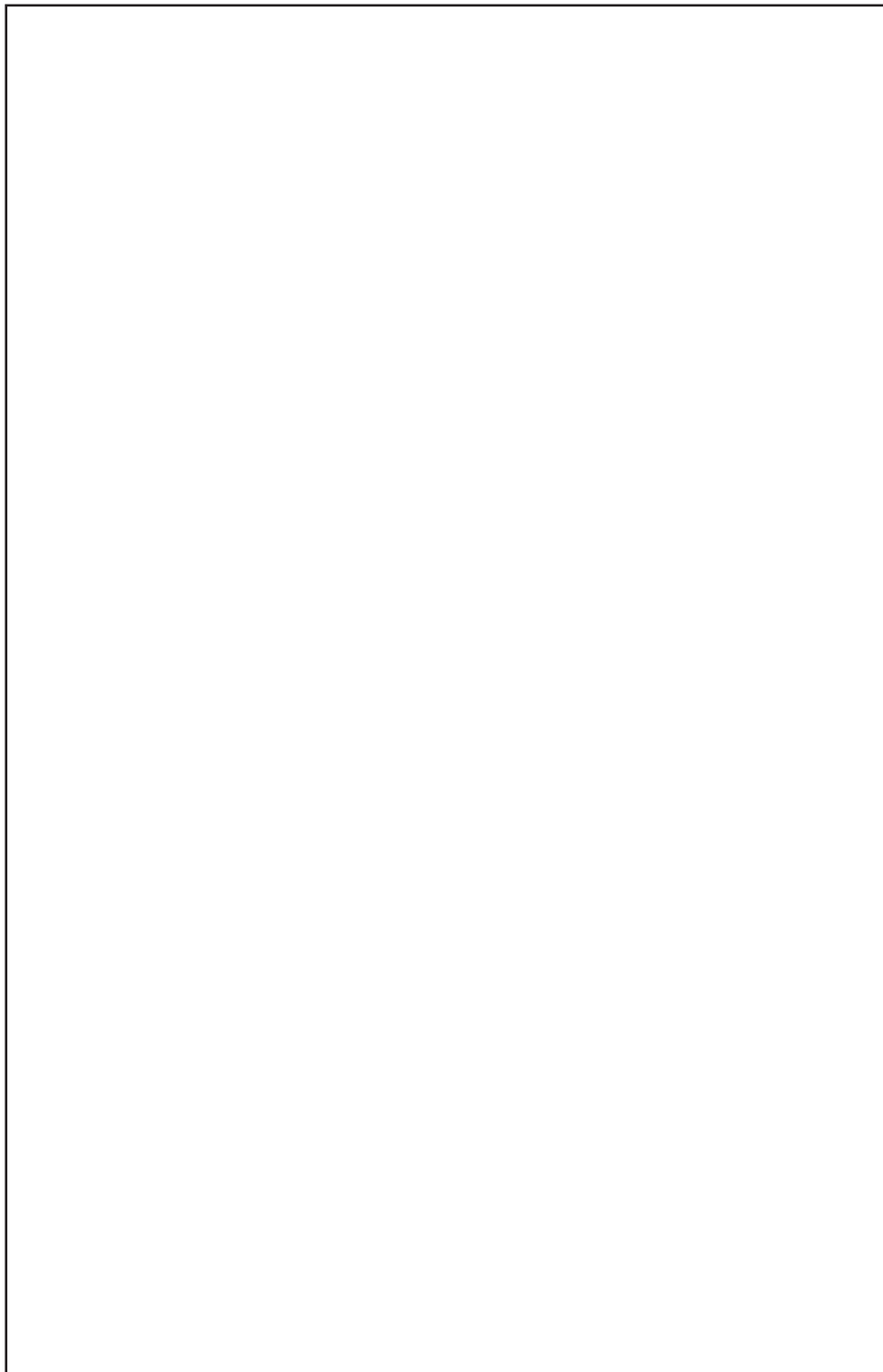
As you have worked through this lesson and listened to Holy Spirit, what is your one significant take-away?

Write a brief summary of your take-away on page 116.

⁹ Treat, Jeremy R. *Seek First: How the Kingdom of God Changes Everything*. Zondervan, 2019. 23

SERMON NOTES

Lesson 7

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