

# WEEKLY SERMON

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## Growing into God's People

*Matthew 13: 31-33 44-52*

In this reading Jesus gives different examples of what the kingdom of heaven is like.

I find it striking that many of these images are slow growing.

The mustard seed takes years to grow into a tree.

The yeast spreads throughout the dough causing the bread to rise, but it doesn't happen instantly, the baker has to wait for the bread to rise.

The pearl can take years in the oyster shell to develop and even when fishing there is a degree of waiting for sufficient fish to swim into the net before it can be drawn up.

Each take time to develop into something beautiful. On their own the mustard seed, the yeast and the speck of dirt in the oyster shell are of little significance. But given the right conditions they turn into something beautiful.

We live in a society of instant pleasure, we can have whatever we want, whenever we want it.

So being told to wait for something can be difficult. It's almost counter-cultural.

But here in Jesus' description of the Kingdom of heaven, waiting is exactly what is required.

There are two aspects of this waiting I find useful.

Firstly, personal formation. My faith and love for God has been formed over a long period of time, and the faith I have today is different to that which I had on the day of my confirmation.

This lifelong development is never finished, because we don't reach perfection this side of heaven, but we should continue to strive to be the people God has called us to be. It takes years to form a beautiful pearl.

The second aspect of waiting is with regards to the wider society.

When I consider our country's history, I believe today we are closer to what God wishes us to be than we were in the past. This is not to say that society is perfect, far from it – but I can see signs of improvement.

We no longer think slavery is acceptable, we do not send children down mines, we have better health care and life expectancy, it is now unusual for mothers to die in labour. Yes, there is much more for us to do, but as society advances, we can see signs of the kingdom breaking in.

So where are you in your journey with Jesus? Are you continuing to grow and develop in your faith, are you allowing God to transform your nature to be closer to that which pleases Him, or are you stagnating?

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