

The Kingdom of God is like

The last of the sunset was dissolving into a sky full of stars. Jesus sat on flat stone bench and felt the heat of the summer day still rising from the rock. A cool breeze came in off the lake and Jesus sighed with contentment.

Philip asked him: "Today, you were teaching in parables. I understand the story, like the growing seeds, but what is the real meaning."

Jesus smiled at Philip and explained, "Each one must discover the meaning for themselves. The Parable of the Growing Seed teaches that these seeds are all in God's care. We may be able to plant the seeds in the ground and water them, but the seeds only grow and become what God has willed."

The other disciples in the patio listened carefully to the starlit figure sitting on the bench.

Jesus continued: "We can only stand aside and watch with wonder as the Father's power is revealed. Then, in the fullness of time, when the fields are ready and the vines and branches are ready to harvest, the Father gives us his gift. We receive all of the crop. He holds nothing back."

The disciples sat in silence with Jesus under the canopy of stars. No-one spoke. They were thinking about seeds.

Andrew suddenly declared: "Then you are such a seed...becoming what your Father has willed."

Jesus smiled again, pleased with Andrew's insight. Andrew was the first disciple, having been a follower of John the Baptist and a witness at Jesus' baptism.

Jesus said to Andrew, "You too are such a seed. And as you begin to grow this day, you cannot imagine the harvest you will bring. I assure you, it will be so great that, like the yield of the mustard seed, the birds of the air will make their nest in your branches."

The Disciples sat again in reflective silence. A scent of smoke passed by on the gentle breeze. Two dogs were barking in the distance. The stars brightened in the darkening sky. It had been a long day. Peter yawned and got up to go into the house.

Jesus closed his eyes and rested. It was too dark for



anyone to see that he was still smiling. It had been a very good day.



Jesus and his small band of disciples were themselves like a tiny mustard seed. The vast Roman Empire sprawled over the Mediterranean world. They were just a few insignificant fishermen from one of the primitive territories of the empire. They had no rank or title. Yet the Jews believed that God would one day establish his kingdom to rule unchallenged over all the earth. How then could the future glory of such a kingdom be contained in the obscure carpenter's son who came down to Galilee to begin his ministry?

How then can the kingdom of God be contained in each one of us? God will provide the power for the seeds to grow in our heart if we are willing to nourish them with the water of our love and faith.