

# Scripture and Sermon Starter

*"He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches." ~Matthew 13:31-32*

God can do big things with small beginnings. In the parable of the mustard seed, Jesus reminds his disciples of this simple truth. The mustard seed is tiny, almost invisible to the human eye. And yet, with time and nurture, it takes on a life of its own. It becomes something so lush and abundant that it grows out of control! This wild weed will not be contained; it grows so big, it offers shade and shelter to the birds of the air. It becomes a source that provides for God's creatures.

What would happen if you could "grow your compassion" like that kind of seed?

When the news is heavy and the need of our neighbors feels overwhelming, it is tempting to look at what we have to offer and feel that our gifts are too small to make a difference. But a simple parable reminds us otherwise-- with faith, all things are possible. And as the need around us grows, our compassion and generosity grow along with it.

With God, even the smallest gift can be transformed into something that gives life. How many small things can you think of that have miraculous potential?

A few short words on a blank page grow into a beautiful poem; a powerful sermon; or a world-changing book.

A spark becomes a blazing campfire.

A newborn baby grows into a child, full of joy and light.

A small gift of compassion? That has endless potential.

What you put in the offering plate--or share when you click the 'donate' button-- can become fish for a family in Haiti; water for a village in Kenya; new crops for young farmers in Sierra Leone; or a new freezer for a church food bank in Florida.

That compassion is a gift that literally reaches around the world, sharing hope and changing lives. With God, no crisis is too great; and no gift is too small. When you give through Week of Compassion, your gift is transformed into something miraculous that travels far beyond our reach. Like your compassion, that gift grows and takes on a life of its own; and when that happens, anything is possible.

