



Daily Reflections

February 1, 2019

Scripture

Mark 4: 26-34

Jesus said to the crowds:

"This is how it is with the Kingdom of God;
it is as if a man were to scatter seed on the land
and would sleep and rise night and day
and the seed would sprout and grow,
he knows not how.

Of its own accord the land yields fruit,
first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear.
And when the grain is ripe, he wields the sickle at once,
for the harvest has come."

He said,

"To what shall we compare the Kingdom of God,
or what parable can we use for it?

It is like a mustard seed that, when it is sown in the ground,
is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth.

But once it is sown, it springs up and becomes the largest of plants
and puts forth large branches,
so that the birds of the sky can dwell in its shade."

With many such parables

he spoke the word to them as they were able to understand it.

Without parables he did not speak to them,

but to his own disciples he explained everything in private.

Our Scripture Reflection

Growing in faith, growing in holiness, is a slow and at times difficult process. Some days we move four giants steps forward only to be knocked back two steps the very next day because of something petty we did. How do we make progress? I pray as though everything depends upon God and work as though everything depends upon me. Jesus teaches us in today's scripture that we must keep focused on the goal which is to be a faithful disciple. With His Grace all things are possible.

Food for your Journey

In the summer of 1868, Mark Twain visited Elmira, New York, and instantly fell madly in love with Olivia ("Livy") Langdon. Turned down because of his brashness, brusqueness, and unbelief, he immediately turned over a new leaf for the sake of love. He began reading the Bible, even the epistles of St. Paul, and immersed himself in a book of sermons by the great "pulpit prince" Henry Ward Beecher. He started attending church socials, and turned his life around until Livy could not help but notice his transformation. Whenever she didn't show interest, Twain backslid into sin. When she gave him some encouragement, Twain doubled his quota of sermons and churchgoing. As he wrote to her:

"I don't drink Anything, now, dear, & so your darling noble old heart has been troubling itself all for nothing! But please don't let my motive distress you, Livy. You know the child must crawl before it walks - & I must do right for love of you while I am in the infancy of Christianity; & then I can do right for love of the Savior when I shall have gotten my growth. And especially don't give this instance any importance, for it is no sacrifice, because I have not now, & never had, any love for any kind of liquors, & not even a passable liking for any but champagne & ale, & only for these at intervals.

--Mark Twain's Letters,

ed. Harriet Elinor Smith and Richard Bucci

(Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990) 2:354

Methinks thou cost protest too much, Mark Twain.

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear God, I want to be closer to You. I want to live like Jesus. Help me to keep focused on living like Him. And if I should stumble or fall, get me back on the road again. Amen