

**Worship Material**  
**Wait and see**  
**Materials from Roots Bible Study**  
**Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> July**

**Begin with an opening prayer**

Lord God, we leave worldly thoughts behind,  
and gather to seek your wisdom.

Teach us kingdom values, we pray,  
so that we may grow in faith  
this day and always.

**Amen.**

**Read Matthew 13:31-33,44-52**

**Bible notes**

How can Jesus' disciples make sense of the kingdom of heaven? Chapter 13 is one of the major teaching blocks of Matthew's Gospel, and in it Jesus uses parable after parable to help his followers begin to understand. This week's reading offers five pictures that challenge hearers to see the details of ordinary life in a kingdom perspective.

The mustard seed (vv.31-32) is tiny and easy to miss. Even when someone does venture to plant it, it will take time to grow into a tree, big enough to be a home for birds – yet it is still there, growing at its own pace. Matthew may intend a comparison with Old Testament stories about trees, which often act as a metaphor for pride and power (Ezekiel 31:1-13, Israel's enemy Assyria is a cedar tree that God caused to be cut down).

The yeast takes us into the world of baking. This woman is working with a huge amount of flour, and perhaps Matthew wants us to recall the feasts that characterise the kingdom of heaven (e.g. 14:18-21). The amount of yeast is tiny, and it disappears into the flour as it is kneaded, and the dough takes time to rise – yet the baker can be confident that she will have bread to share.

The parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl focus on the value of the kingdom of heaven and the cost of gaining it. The workman – perhaps a hired day-labourer – risks all he has to profit from his life-changing discovery. The parable of the merchant may depend on a comparison from less to greater. If a merchant, focused on profit, behaves like this, how much more should those who long for the kingdom commit to pursuing it.

The final parable suggests that the kingdom is a 'catch-all' net, where good and bad coexist – a reflection of the disciples' lived experience, then as now. It points to a future time when the kingdom will come fully and evil will be wiped out.

## Prayer

God, we thank you for teaching us the things that matter,  
the things of true value.

We praise you that the treasures of your kingdom are hidden beneath the mundanity,  
and sometimes the drama, of everyday life;  
and that they are often there in small ways that,  
if nurtured, grow in abundance.

Thank you for your pearls of wisdom and your seeds of faith.  
Let your Kingdom grow among us.

**Amen.**

## A prayer to conclude

Loving God,  
thank you for your reign breaking in, all around, for those with eyes to see.  
May the light of your love be focused within us.  
May we create space in our hearts to treasure it.  
And may we be of service to your love, now and always.

**Amen.**