



seed , because He is the seed of Abraham: *To Abraham were the promises made and to his seed. He saith not, And to his seeds, as of many: but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ* (Gal. iii. 16). Not alone is

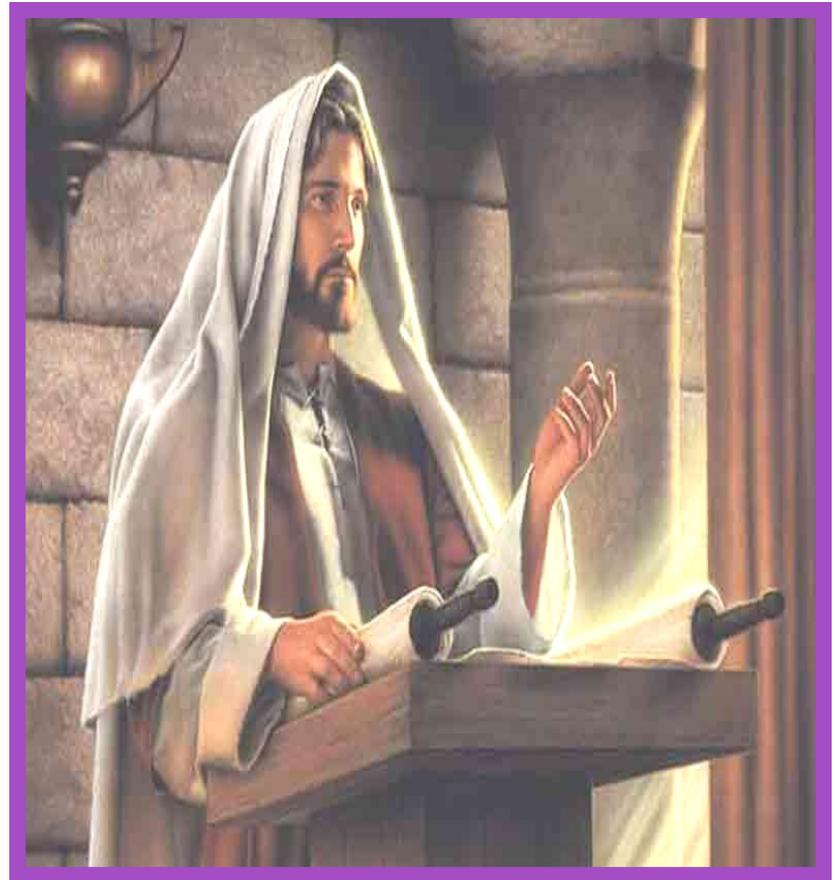
Christ the seed, but *the least of all the seeds*, because He came not in power, nor in wealth, nor in the wisdom of the world. But suddenly He enfolds as a tree the soaring eminence of His might, that we may say: *I sat under his shadow, whom I desired* (Cant. ii. 3)... He appears as both seed and tree, for He is a seed when it is said: *Is not this the carpenter's son?* But in the midst of these words He grows. The Jews could not see the branches of the veiled tree, bear witness saying: *How came this man by this wisdom and miracles* (Mt. xiii. 54, 55)?

The seed is a figure, the Tree is wisdom... there rested the holy John when he leaned on the breast of Jesus... Peter is a branch, a branch likewise is Paul... so we who before were idle, now with hands unbound through faith in Christ, and freed from the shackles of the sabbatical observance, give ourselves to good works: and even in our very rejoicing we have liberty, and shut out intemperance, lest being made free of the Law we become slaves of our desires. For the Law bound us to itself, that it might free us from desires. Grace which has taken away the lesser servitude, imposes yet more serious obligations. *All things are lawful to me, but not all are expedient* (1 Cor. vi. 12); for it is a grave thing to use our liberty so as to fall back under dominion. Cease to be subject to the law, so that by reason of your virtues you shall be above the law. Amen.



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## **SERMON ON THE GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED FROM THE FATHER'S OF THE CHURCH # 138 - 1**



**JESUS, OUR FIRST PREACHER!**

**6TH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY**

## Based on the Divine Office-Douay-Rheims Version

Volume 1 - Pages 1432 - 1433 (1962 edition)

Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew 8: 31-35

by: Saint Ambrose, Bishop and Doctor

***To what is the kingdom of God like, and whereunto shall I resemble it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and cast into his garden, and it grew and became a great tree, and the birds of the air lodged in the branches thereof.***

This Gospel lesson teaches us that it is the nature of the figures which are taken as examples that we must consider, and not their appearance... For the Lord spoke in another place of the grain of mustard seed as having faith: *For if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain: Remove from hence hither, and it shall remove* (Mt. xvii. 19). Not small, but truly great, is that faith which can bid a mountain move itself; and so neither did the Lord demand that the Apostles have but a moderate faith; for He knew that they must enter into combat with the might of the spirit of iniquity, now rearing itself up against them and that great faith as we read what the Apostle said: *If I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains* (1 Cor. xiii. 2).

...Faith is then truly the kingdom of heaven, and the kingdom of heaven is faith. He therefore that has faith, possesses the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven is within us, and faith is within us; for we read: *For lo, the kingdom of God is within you* (Lk. xvii. 21). Also elsewhere, *Have in you the faith of God* (Mk. xi. 22). Then Peter, who had all faith, received the keys of the kingdom of heaven, that he might open it to others.

...The nature of the mustard seed is very plain and of little value; but if bruised or crushed it shows forth its power. So faith first seems a simple thing; but if it is bruised by its enemies it gives forth proof of its power, so as to fill others who hear or read of it with the odor of its sweetness... At times, faith is bruised, at another time oppressed, at other times it is sown. The Lord Himself is the grain of mustard seed. He was without injury; but the people were unaware of

Him as a grain of mustard seed of which they took no notice. He chose to be bruised, that we might say: *For we are the good odor of Christ unto God* (II Cor. ii. 15). He chose to be crushed; ... He chose to be planted in the earth as *a seed which a man took and cast into his garden*. For it was in a garden that Christ was taken prisoner, and likewise buried: He sprung up in a garden, where He also rose from the dead, and became a tree; as it is written: *As the apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my beloved among the sons* (Cant. ii. 3).

Sow Christ in your garden... so that he may grow and breathe forth the multiple sweetness of His many virtues. There where fruit is, let Christ be found. Plant ye the Lord Jesus. He is a seed when *a man takes hold of him*: He is a tree when He rises again, a tree that gives shade to the world; He is a seed when He is buried in the earth: He is a tree when raised to heaven.

Press close to Christ, and sow faith. We follow close and sow faith when we adore Christ crucified... We sow the faith when from the prophetic and apostolic writings and from the Gospel we believe in the passion of the Lord. We therefore sow the faith when we bury it in the soft and tender soil of the Lord's flesh, so that from the embrace and warmth of the sacred Body, faith spreads itself abroad. For he that has believed that the Son of God became man, believes that He died for us, believes that He rose again, therefore sow the faith when you plant it in His sepulchre...

Do not despise this grain of mustard seed: *It is the least indeed of all seeds; but when it is grown up, it is greater than all herbs, and becomes a tree*. If Christ be the grain of mustard seed, in what manner is He *the least of all seeds*, and how does He grow up? Not indeed in His nature does He grow, but in outward appearance. Would you know him as *the least of all? We have seen him and there was no beauty in him, nor comeliness* (Is. liii. 2). Behold Him, *greater than all: Thou art beautiful above the sons of men* (Ps. xlv. 3). For He that had neither beauty nor comeliness is become more beautiful than the angels, above the glory of the prophets... But Christ is also a