

MONDAY, December 21, 2009:

Matthew 13:31-32 *"The Kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed..."*

Do you ever feel like you're outnumbered, overwhelmed, and over-taxed? That is pretty much a description of the Christmas season by this time of the month!☺

That is why I pointed you to today's scripture verse. In the midst of all the "stuff" that is going on in your life you may have forgotten the little things.

Who would have thought that a little baby born to a very insignificant young couple in a very insignificant little town in a very insignificant little country would some day change the world? Yet that is exactly what happened. How did it happen? It all started when that young couple responded in faith to the call of God.

You are no different. The very fact that you are reading this devotional is a good indication that you have a desire to know and love God. So remember, today you are planting seeds. Seeds are little things and seeds are soon forgotten once they're planted and are out of sight. But if they are planted intentionally, one day they reappear! They spring forth from the ground bringing life and fruitfulness.

See what you are doing today as "planting seeds." It may seem so small and insignificant. You may feel like you are achieving nothing and making little difference, but if you do what you do "as unto the Lord" trust me, one day you will be surprised at the good that comes from it.

SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 9:10

"Vision is the art of seeing things invisible." _Jonathan Swift

TUESDAY, December 22, 2009:

Matthew 13:33 *"The Kingdom of heaven is like leaven..."* (yeast)

History shows that the Crusades were a failure. Anytime we try to *make* people become Christians we miss the point. Jesus started and built his Kingdom on love. The only fanfare that came with his arrival was angels speaking to a few shepherds on the night of his birth. Outside of that, Jesus lived a very low-key life. Yet today we are still celebrating his appearance on the stage of human history.

How can this be? The answer is simple, instead of beating people over the head to try to convince them that he was "the way, the truth and the life", he simply showed them that his words were true by making daily deposits into the lives of the people he came in contact with.

Nothing has changed. The Kingdom of Heaven can come to your home, school and work station; never with the hammer and sword, but with the loving and excellent service that you give day by day.

Scripture: Mark 10:45

"When you choose to be pleasant and positive in the way you treat others, you have also chosen, in most cases, how you are going to be treated by others." _Zig Ziglar, *You Can Reach the Top*

WEDNESDAY, December 23, 2009:

Matthew 13:44 *"...like treasure hidden in a field...found"*

Church is sort of like a shopping mall. What I mean is, if you want to buy someone a gift you go to a place that has gifts available. You walk in and there are things displayed and available. That is not a bad thing, especially if you still haven't finished your Christmas shopping!

The same is true at church. If you want to worship or hear a word from God, you go where it is displayed for all to see and receive.

However, don't miss the fact that some of the best gifts are found in the most unlikely places. They are often found while you are digging through your "to-do" list. Just like a farmer that is out working in the field and discovers a treasure, you also will discover that some of life's greatest gifts are found in the most unexpected places.

Thank God for the wonderful Christmas programs we had at church this year; but don't forget, your most meaningful Christmas gift may be discovered while digging through these last few hectic hours before Christmas morn...don't miss it!

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 84:3

"Risks are not to be evaluated in terms of the probability of success, but in terms of the value of the goal." _John Maxwell

THURSDAY, December 24, 2009:

Matthew 13:45 *"...like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls..."*

A tradition in my family is that we go shopping for "stocking stuffers" on Christmas Eve. There is something special (at least to us☺) about getting out in the last minute rush and seeking for those special little gifts that will bring smiles the next morning.

In some ways, that is how the Kingdom of heaven is. There are times that you stumble upon unexpected treasures as you go about your daily life (see yesterday's devotional); but many of the benefits that come do so because we intentionally seek for the treasures of the Kingdom.

And the irony is that the greatest treasures are often in small boxes...pearl boxes.

So today, you may be feeling a little flat with this whole Christmas thing; don't be! Most people have pretty much discounted this year; but I encourage you to rummage through the losses, failures, and disappointments of this quickly fading year one more time. You'll be surprised at what you find. Jesus calls them "pearls" and they can give you joy even on the darkest night.

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 58:9-11

"There are two kinds of gratitude: the sudden kind we feel for what we take and the larger kind we feel for what we give." _Edwin Arlington Robinson