
Would You Rather? by Grace Cutler

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Would you rather never be able to speak again or be forced to say everything on your mind? Wow, that's a tough question to answer. Let's think about this for a second, well, for starters are you the type of person who loves talking? Because if you are, would you truly be able to never speak again? ,and what would actually happen if you had to never speak again? Would you have to write down everything you wanted to say? ,Learn sign language?

Or if you choose the other option and had to say everything on your mind, well, you might lose some friends real fast or share information that is supposed to be a secret,

Isn't it hard to pick just one? Life throws difficult questions at us, questions we may not always want to answer, or know the answer to. And it is not only questions that we face, but challenges too. We might find ourselves asking, why is this happening to me?... What did I do to be put in this position? However, we have a much bigger question presented to us today, What is the Kingdom of God?

Like everyone, I also ask questions... I find myself asking one particular question a lot, why is my sister different from me? Ava, my younger sister, has many learning disabilities, Passing her on the street, no one would guess Ava has difficulties in her daily life. Yet, she has a very hard time doing even the simplest things. It is so hard for me to see her struggle, when I am able to do the same activity so easily, Why was I blessed this way and not her?

I cannot answer why my sister was born with these disabilities, I may never know. But, I have learned that we are to take what we have and use it to grow. I am inspired by Ava without her even knowing it. She is not consumed by material possessions or the latest Hollywood gossip. Without these distractions it is much easier for Ava to answer the question before us today, what is the Kingdom of God?

Let's see what Jesus has to say,.We all must remember that we are the Kingdom of God and we are all united as one... We live as one. As the Gospel tells us today "the kingdom is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs".

What is Jesus trying to say? Let's break it down,.ok so Jesus says the Kingdom is like a mustard seed,a mustard seed? That is pretty small, so that must mean that the Kingdom is hard to recognize and Jesus wants us to really take our time to look at the works around us. Ok. Got that part down.

The second part of Jesus' claim is that the mustard seed grows. This must mean the Kingdom of God grows too. We might not notice this growth, yes, it is sometimes hard to recognize all of Gods works around us, But, once we begin to open our eyes the growth is not only apparent but also uplifting. We can see how much God plays a part in our daily lives.

Third, Jesus tells us that anything is possible. The Kingdom that started out as a tiny mustard seed will become the greatest of all shrubs... Who knew something so small could have such amazing potential?

Jesus goes on to tell us that the kingdom "puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade." These birds are God's creations, the entire world, Our friends, family, even strangers. In times of need, they are her for support. However, "these birds" are far reaching. We might not even know who is leaning on us, We might not realize what kind of influence we have on those around us. That is the beauty of the Kingdom, helping out in ways we don't even recognize.

The Kingdom's branches are endless. My sister Ava is a branch for me to rest on, quite possibly without realizing it. She reminds me every day how God has blessed my life. Hopefully, our youth group has a similar impact. Who might be resting in our branches? What part do we play in spreading the kingdom of God? In the same way, our group looks to rest in you. In doing so, we are able to experience the kingdom of God through all of your branches.

I think we all want to hear a straight answer about Gods Kingdom. But, getting a direct answer to every question we ask is not always the best solution. If we are constantly given the answers to life's questions, we may become robots... We would not need to believe in ourselves, We could simply depend on our Creator, rely on God for all the answers. As robots, we would just be programmed do to what God wanted. I believe the harvest tastes sweeter when we help out, With God, we plant seeds, water them, and help them grow. We take care of those seeds. In time, God's kingdom is harvested. What a beautiful thing to help create!

As children, my sister Ava and I would play outside and make heart-shaped mud pies. We used a heart mold and would take water and make mud. Then Ava and I would add flowers and grass for decoration. We would lay them on an old piece of tile in the sun to harden. After they "baked", we were so proud of our masterpieces. We would run to our parents and show them what we made. We took God's creation, the dirt, the water, the sun, and even the plastic mold, and made something beautiful. The feeling Ava and I had after making those mud pies was a feeling of accomplishment. If we are just handed all that we desire, that fulfilling experience would be absent.

This leads us back to our question today, what is the Kingdom of God. To me, the Kingdom of God is everywhere and in everyone. Over the years, I have learned to stop questioning God for making Ava the unique person that she is. She is God's creation. Her branches are spreading the beautiful kingdom of God. , And I have begun to realize just how influential the God in Ava can be. I have also realized that we are co-creators with God in making up the Kingdom. Like the mud pies, God was there with me while I made them.

God shapes our lives; helps us and guides us along our way through the always growing Kingdom. God influences the kingdom that is already within us. We are called to be branches for one another. Join me today, as we begin to open our eyes and truly notice that God is all around us,.Amen!