

Sermon 讲道信息

August 八月 3, 2025

Matthew 马太福音 13:31-33

When nothing seems to be happening 「当似乎什么都没有发生时」

This weekend is BC Day. This public holiday was introduced in 1974 when the Attorney General proposed a way to recognize the culture and achievements of British Columbia and to give people a long weekend to enjoy in the middle of summer. 本周末是卑斯日。这公共假期于 1974 年由检察总长提出，旨在表彰卑斯省的文化和成就，并为人提供一个长周末可在盛夏时节享受。

The first Monday in August was chosen because it echoes the British parliament's declaration on Monday, August 2, 1858, that British Columbia was a "crown colony". 选择八月的第一个星期一是因为它呼应了英国议会于 1858 年 8 月 2 日星期一宣布卑斯省为“王室殖民地”。

Of course, European explorers were not the first in British Columbia. Archaeological evidence of indigenous peoples has been dated as early as 13,500 years ago. 当然，欧洲探险家并不是卑斯省的首批居民。考古证据表明，原住民的活动可追溯至 13,500 年前。

How do you plan to spend this weekend? Hiking trails? Resting in Stanley Park? Enjoying a leisurely breakfast? Walking at Jericho Beach or going downtown? 你计划如何度过这周末呢？远足？在史丹利公园休息？享受悠闲的早餐？在耶利哥海滩散步？还是，去市中心？

I plan to do nothing! If I get the opportunity, I want to be an example of what happens when nothing happens! 我打算什么都不做！如果我有机会，我想成为一个榜样，展示当什么都没发生时会发生什么！

But this got me thinking. Sometimes, it seems as if God is on vacation, taking a long weekend break, doing nothing. 但这让我开始思考：有时，似乎上帝也在度假，休息了一个长周末，什么都不做。

Have you ever thought this? God, it seems, likes to take his time and we don't like the time he takes. I think this is a common thought. 你有没有想过这？上帝似乎喜欢慢慢来，而我們不喜欢祂的不着急。我想这是个普遍的想法。

Back in June when Mark organized his question and answer evening, one person asked a question about how we cope wondering if God is going to fulfil a promise he made when it looks like he isn't. 今年六月，当马克 (Mark) 组织问答之夜时，有人问了一个问题：当我们疑惑上帝会否履行祂所做的承诺（因为祂看似不会）时，我们该如何应对，。

So, today, as I hope we have time to rest, let's see what answer the Scriptures give when we're tempted to think God is taking too long. 所以，今天，我希望我们都有时间安息，让我们看看，在我们被引诱去想上帝花了太长时间时，圣经给出什么答案。

Jesus told lots of stories. We call them parables. These stories have shaped our culture, our language, our outlook: 耶稣讲了很多故事，我们称它们为“比喻”。这些故事塑造了我们的文化、语言和观点：

we use the term "Good Samaritan" for someone who cares for people;

我们用“好撒玛利亚人”来形容关心他人的人；

we use "prodigal son" for someone who turns up after making many mistakes.

我们用“浪子”来形容那些在犯下许多错误后突然好转的人。

Both are parables Jesus told. Matthew 13 has seven of Jesus' parables: the parable of the sower, the parable of the weeds, the parable of the net, the parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl, and the two parables read to us a moment ago. 这两都是耶稣讲的比喻。马太福音 13 章收录了耶稣的七个比喻：撒种的比喻、杂草的比喻、撒网的比喻、藏宝和寻珠的比喻，以及刚才诵读经文中的那两个比喻。

One theme is common to all the parables in Matthew 13. It answers the question: why does it seem God is doing nothing? 马太福音 13 章所有的比喻有一个共同主题，回答了“为什么似乎上帝什么也没做？”的问题？

We could say these parables are about "patience", "waiting", "giving it time". But really these parables tell us that God's work isn't necessarily dramatic, immediately obvious, or instantly identified. 我们可以说这些比喻是

关于“耐心”、“等待”、“给时间”。但实际上，这些比喻告诉我们，上帝的工作并不一定是戏剧性的、立时明显的或瞬间被识别到的。

Instead, God's kingdom advances more quietly, less obviously.

相反，上帝的国是以更安静、更不明显的方式拓展。

It's the steady slow-turning pressure of a hand-held wrench on a bolt rather than the sudden burst of an impact driver, or the gradual drip of water filling a tank rather than the powerful gush from a fire hose. 就像用手提式扳手缓慢而稳当地拧紧螺栓，而非冲击钻的突然爆发；又像水滴逐渐填满水箱，而非消防水龙头的喷发而出的水流。

What these parables teach is this: don't make a presumption, don't draw an early conclusion, don't think that apparent inaction is correct;

这些比喻教导我们：不要妄设假定，不要过早下定论，不要认为表面上的不作为是正确的；

do keep trusting, do persevere, do lean on God's sovereignty and God's timing.

要继续相信，要坚持不懈，要倚靠上帝的主权和上帝的时机。

Both parables begin, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like". What is this Kingdom?

这两个比喻都以“天国好比”开头，这天国是什么？

Matthew uses "Kingdom of Heaven"; the other Gospels and the rest of the New Testament used "Kingdom of God". They mean the same; it's just that Matthew prefers "Kingdom of Heaven" because he doesn't want to suggest ideas of an earthly military kingdom to his Jewish readers.

马太福音使用“天国”；其他福音书和新约其余部分则使用“上帝的国”。它们意思相同；只是马太更倾向于使用“天国”，因为他不想让犹太读者联想到人世间的军事王国。

Let's also remember that the Kingdom of God or Heaven isn't a geographic location, with international boundaries, like the United Kingdom.

我们还应记住，上帝的国或天国并非在一个地理位置上，也没有国家边界，和英国不一样。

Instead, it's the realm where God's values are at work. The Kingdom is about God's reign showing itself in our world and our lives. 反之，上帝的国是在于祂的价值观得以实现；是关乎上帝的统治在我们的世界和生活中显明。

We also shouldn't think the Kingdom is another way of saying the Church.

我们也不应认为天国是普世教会的另一种说法。

The Church – the community of believers in Jesus Christ as Lord – is evidence of the Kingdom and part of the Kingdom, but the Kingdom of God is bigger than the church. 教会——信奉耶稣基督为主的信徒群体——是天国的证据，也是天国的一部分，但天国比教会更大。

God's power is at work even where the church doesn't exist. God can move in people's lives and God can work his purposes through people even when those people are not Christians. That's encouraging, isn't it? 上帝的权能即使在教会不存在的地方也有效。上帝可以在人的生命中行事，并通过人来实现祂的旨意，即使这些人不是基督徒。这难道不令人鼓舞吗？

So, let's look at these two parables. 那么，让我们来看看这两个比喻。

In the first, a man sows a mustard seed in his field. Jesus says this is the smallest of seeds and where birds can nest. 在第一个比喻中，一个人在田里撒了一粒芥菜种。耶稣说这是最小的种子而鸟儿可以在上面筑巢的。

Of course, Jesus is not giving a botanical lesson: the mustard seed isn't the smallest seed (the smallest seed is the orchid seed), and the mustard tree isn't a tree worth perching in.

当然，耶稣并不是在讲植物课：芥菜种并不是最小的种子（最小的是兰花种子），而芥菜树也不是值得鸟儿栖息的树。

Jesus isn't talking botanically; he's talking proverbially. The point isn't about plants and the nesting habits of birds; it's about how what seems insignificant becomes substantial.

耶稣并非在谈论植物学，而是在说众所周知的话。重点不在于植物和鸟类的筑巢习惯，而是在于看似微不足道

道的事物如何变得重要。

Small beginnings produce large results. 微小的开端能带来巨大的成果。

In the second story, a woman works leaven or yeast it into flour. The yeast raises the dough to produce bread. The point of this story is the small amount of yeast and the huge amount of flour. 在第二个故事中，一个女人将酵母或面酵揉入面粉中。面酵使面团发酵，最终制成面包。这个故事的重点在于少量的面酵与数量庞大的面粉。

This woman is not making a couple of donuts; the amount of flour will produce enough dough to feed over 100 people.

这女人不是在做一两个甜甜圈；面粉的数量可以制造作出足够喂饱超过 100 人的面团。

(Clearly, this woman has muscles and strength! I guess she'd probably win medals for weightlifting! 显然，这女人有肌肉有力气！我想她可能在举重比赛中能赢得奖牌！)

The point is this: Jesus is saying that no matter how big the circumstance or great the challenge or huge the mission, like the small amount of yeast, his Kingdom works in a hidden, unremarkable, almost imperceptible way.

重点是：耶稣在说，无论环境多么艰难、挑战多么巨大、使命多么宏大，就像那少量的面酵一样，祂的国度是以隐秘的、不引人注目的、几乎察觉不到的方式运作。

How does this speak to us when we wonder if God has taken a long weekend to do nothing?

当我们怀疑上帝是否在享受漫长的周末、什么都不做时，这向我们传达了什么呢？

Here are three simple points. 以下是三个简单要点。

First, snap-shot spirituality won't work. 首先，快照式的灵性是行不通的。

I enjoy photography, playing with aperture, shutter speed, white balance, and ISO settings on my camera to capture a passing car or cyclist. 我喜欢摄影，在相机上调整光圈、快门速度、白平衡和 ISO 设置，以捕捉一辆疾驰而过的汽车或骑自行车的人。

Freezing a car's movement so that it is in sharp focus and the background is a blur gives the sensation of movement, pace, action. 定格着移动的汽车，把它放在清晰的焦点中加上

模糊的背景，营造出驱动、速度和行动的氛围。

But it's just a snap-shot. It says nothing of where the car is going, how well-tuned the engine is, how careful the driver is. It's just a snap-shot. 但这只是一张照片，它无法说明汽车的去向，引擎调校有多好，或是驾驶者有多谨慎。这只是一张瞬间的快照。

And what's more, the driver doesn't care about the snap-shot; the driver cares about reaching the destination. 更有意思的是，司机并不关心这张快照；司机关心的是要到达目的地。

Both parables remind us not to measure our spiritual growth or church life or God's overall purpose in an instant snap-shot. 这两个比喻提醒我们，不要用瞬间的快照来衡量我们的属灵成长、教会生活或上帝的整体计划。

When we do that, we make the mistake of wondering if God is at work or if we should give up and give in. That's snap-shot spirituality. 当我们这样做时，我们是犯下错误，怀疑上帝是否在工作，或不知是否应该放弃并屈服。这就是快照式的灵性。

The apostle Paul was tempted to follow snap-shot spirituality. He thought of giving up and giving in. 使徒保罗曾被诱惑去跟从快照式的灵性，他曾想过放弃并屈服。

In 2 Corinthians 1:8, he says, "We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself."

在哥林多后书 1 章 8 节，保罗说：“因受到无法忍受的压力，甚至连活命的指望都没有了。”

Several chapters later, in 2 Corinthians 11, he catalogues all the struggles, persecutions, and threats he's been through.

几章之后，在哥林多后书 11 章，他列举了自己所经历的一切挣扎、迫害和威胁。

Then, in 2 Corinthians 12:8, he says how he pleaded with God three times to take away what he calls "a thorn in the flesh" (which is probably some sort of persistent handicap).

随后，在哥林多后书 12 章 8 节，他提到自己曾三次求神除去加在他身上的一根刺（这可能是持续的残疾）。

Instead, God showed Paul that he uses weakness to show his power and that his grace is always sufficient.

然而，上帝向保罗显明，祂正是通过软弱来彰显祂的能力，祂的恩典总是足够的。

Paul had to learn that snap-shot spirituality won't work. And he does learn.

保罗不得不学会“快照式灵性”是行不通的。而他确实学会了。

In 2 Timothy 4:7, at the end of his life, Paul says he's run the race, fought the fight, kept the faith, and persevered to the end. 在提摩太后书 4 章 7 节，保罗临终时说，他已经跑完了当跑的路，打完了那美好的仗，守住了该信的道，坚持到了最后。

So don't fret times of doubt, awkward questions deep in your heart, and the apprehensions about God's activity.

所以，不要为怀疑的时刻、心底里的尴尬问题，以及对上帝活动的担忧而烦恼。

Snap-shot spirituality doesn't work because the story isn't over. It's at the end when we know the story is over!

快照式的灵性行不通，是因为故事还没有结束。只有在结束时，我们才知道故事已经结束！

Second, fixing God's schedule won't work. 其次，试图安排上帝的进度是行不通的。

How many times have you heard yourself say, "Lord, I wish you'd hurry up."

你有多少次说过：“主啊，我希望你能快点行动。”

Some years ago, we were trying to figure out home-schooling tutors for our children. We had one or two leads, but nothing finalized. But what was most concerning was that the beginning of the school term was only a week away.

几年前，我们尝试为孩子们的家庭授课寻找私人教师。我们有一两个介绍，但还没有最终确定。而最令人担忧的是，新学期的开始仅剩一周。

I like things planned and organized in advance. I want a clear map. I don't like not knowing what's going to happen.

我喜欢提前规划和安排好一切。我想要清晰的地图，我不喜欢不知道接下来会发生什么。

God, on the other hand, doesn't seem to care much about my preferred schedules. He even appears to enjoy doing things at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour. It can be very frustrating – I have much to learn.

另一方面，上帝仿佛并不太在乎我想要的时间表，甚至祂似乎喜欢在最后一刻才行动。这真能让人非常沮丧——我还有很多需要学习。

So, it comes as no surprise that while the man plants the mustard seed and the woman kneads the flour and yeast, neither can predict when the tree will be ready or the dough has risen sufficiently. 因此，并不令人意外，当男人播种芥菜种和女人揉面粉和酵母时，他们两人都无法预测，树何时成熟或面团何时完成发酵。

In other words, there is no time-scale in these parables.

换句话说，这些比喻并没有时间进度表。

Just look at the parable before the mustard seed and the yeast – the story of the weeds planted among the wheat.

The owner of the field deliberately prevents his servants from their knee-jerk desire to pull up the weeds before the harvest. 仅看看芥菜种和面酵之前的比喻——麦子田中杂草的故事。在收割前，田地的主人故意阻止他的仆人对拔除杂草的本能反应。

God tells us to wait, be patient, and trust his wisdom and ways.

神告诉我们要等待，要有耐心，要相信祂的智慧和做法。

This means things are not always going to look tidy – weeds and wheat will grow together, there will be a waste of resources irrigating more plants than planned, and there will be huge inconvenience and extra effort to separate wheat and weeds at harvest time.

这意味着事情不总是看起来井井有条的——杂草和麦子会一起生长，会浪费资源，灌溉的植物比计划的多，而且在收割时分开麦子和杂草会带来巨大的不便和需要额外努力。

But God is okay with this. 但上帝对此是能接受的。

It's the same with the parable of the mustard seed and the yeast: God says, "My time scale moves at a different pace, don't try to fix it, correct it, divert it, or circumvent it."

这与芥菜种和面酵的比喻一样，神说：“我的时间进度运转得有自己的节奏，不要试图改修改它、纠正它、转向它或逃避它。”

So, trying to hurry God along, won't work. 因此，试图催促神是行不通的。

But this doesn't mean nothing is happening! And what about our daughter's education? Sure enough, everything needed fit into place.

但这并不意味着什么都没发生！至于我们女儿的教育？确实，一切所需都各就各位。

Third, trust and patience will work. 第三，信靠与忍耐会行得通。

There's a wonderful phrase I heard years ago in the Alpha Course: when you can't trace God's hand, trust God's heart.

多年前我在启发课程听到过一句美妙的话：当你无法发现上帝的手，相信上帝的心。

We can't always see what God is doing. Sometimes it seems he's taken a vacation from handling the affairs of his creation.

我们无法总是看到上帝在做什么。有时祂似乎从管理祂的创造中，停了下来放假。

What happens when it seems God is on vacation? We struggle to see God's hand; we struggle to comprehend his ways. 当上帝似乎是在度假时，会发生什么？我们挣扎着要看见上帝的手；我们挣扎着要理解祂的做法。

And doubts come: if God is so loving and powerful, why isn't he answering me? We think God owes us an answer as if we have the right to pass judgement on his sovereignty.

怀疑随之而来：如果上帝是那么慈爱 and 大有能力，为什么祂不回答我？我们认为上帝欠我们一个答案，仿佛我们有权对祂的主权进行判决。

Instead, in times of delay or uncertainty, God is inviting us to be patient and trust him.

相反，在延迟或不确定的时刻，上帝邀请我们耐心等待并信靠祂。

C.S. Lewis, the great Christian author and philosopher, once said, "I am sure that God keeps no one waiting unless he sees that it is good for him to wait." 伟大的基督徒作家和哲学家鲁益师曾说：“我确信，除非上帝认为等待对那人有益，祂不会让任何人等待。”

When God wants to form his likeness in us, sometimes the only way to overcome our stubbornness or impatience is to make us wait! It's painful for us, but it's the only way to refine us. 当上帝想把我们塑造成祂的形象时，有时解决我们的固执或不耐烦的唯一方法，就是让我们等待！这对我们来说是痛苦的，但这是唯一能精炼我们的方法。

The sower of the mustard seed and the baker of the flour and yeast had to be patient and trust. They cannot control the processes of plant growth or baking bread. 撒芥菜种的人和烘焙面粉与面酵的人必须耐心等待并信靠。他们无法掌控植物生长或烘焙面包的过程。

There's an interesting parallel in 1 Corinthians 3:5-7. Paul reminds the Corinthians that it isn't the ability or personality of Christian leaders that matters. 哥林多前书 3 章 5-7 节有一段有趣的平行经文，保罗提醒哥林多人，重要的不是基督徒领袖的能力或性格。

Paul and another leader, Apollos, may have been used by God to begin the church in Corinth and to start discipleship classes in Corinth, but it's God who makes them grow into Christian maturity. "So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes all things grow." 保罗和另一位领袖亚波罗可能曾被神使用，在哥林多开始教会并启动门徒训练课程，但是，是上帝使人成长为成熟的基督徒：“可见，栽种的算不了什么，浇灌的也算不了什么；惟有神能使它生长。”

If you are wondering what God is doing, if you are wondering if God is at work in your life, the Lord says, "Be patient and keep trusting – in time you will see my hand."

如果你在想神在做什么，如果你在想神是否在你生命中工作，主说：“要耐心等候，继续信靠——时候到了你会看见我的手。”

Snap-shot spirituality won't work – God calls us to have a long-term perspective. Trying to fix God's schedules won't work – we need to trust God's timing and power.

快照式的灵性是行不通的——上帝呼召我们要要有长远的眼光。试图修改上帝的计划是行不通的——我们需要信靠上帝的时机和权能。



So, patience and trust will work; God will fulfil his purposes. But there's even more: our expectations of his purposes will be exceeded! 因此，耐心与信靠会行得通；上帝必成就他的旨意。但不只这样，我们对祂旨意的期待将被超越！

My mom was an accomplished violinist and professional violin teacher. Over 65 years, she taught hundreds of children.

我母亲是一位杰出的小提琴家及专业小提琴教师。在超过 65 年间，她教导了数百名孩子。

All her students started the same way – emitting sounds from the violin that made a wailing cat sound musical. 她所有学生都是以同样的方式开始——奏出的小提琴声音使猫儿的哀号变得有音乐感。

Though many students stopped playing as adults, some continued. And a few have become very accomplished. 尽管她许多学生在成年后便停止演奏，但有些人继续坚持；其中少数人更有不凡的成就。

In their cases, the initial expectations during the cat-wailing days have been gloriously exceeded. This is true in the Christian life. 从他们的实例中，在奏出猫儿哀号期间的最初期望已经被远远超越。这点在基督徒生活中也同样成立。

The day will come when we'll look back in awe at God's work in our lives – we'll see the full magnitude of his sovereign ways. 终有一天，我们会惊叹又敬畏地回顾上帝在我们生命中所行的奇事；我们将目睹展现于我们眼前，祂那至高无上的威严与权威的全部。

The book of Revelation, at the end of the Bible, gives us a hint of this. The book closes with a picture of a great city descending to earth, where every tribe and tongue is represented, and where the throne is occupied by one like a Lamb who was slain and like a Lion, the Lion of Judah - Jesus. 圣经末尾的启示录为我们提示了这一点，它用一座伟大的城降临到地上的景象来结束。城里有来自各个民族和各种语言的人；有一个宝座，上面坐着一位像是被杀的羔羊，又像狮子，就是犹大的狮子——耶稣。

The description in Revelation is matched by Paul's words. 启示录的描述与保罗的话相配。

In 1 Corinthians 2:9, he writes that no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him. 在哥林多前书 2:9，保罗写道：眼睛未曾看见，耳朵未曾听见，人心也未曾想到，神为爱祂的人所预备的。

We have a foretaste, an inkling, because we have the Spirit of God, the third person of the Trinity, dwelling within us: he acts as a down-payment on our eternal future, guaranteeing our inheritance in glory (Ephesians 1:14). 我们有预先的体验、模糊的印象，因为我们有上帝的灵，就是三位一体的第三位格，住在我们里面：祂作为我们永恒未来的定金，保证我们在荣耀中的基业（以弗所书 1:14）。

But until Christ comes, we only see and know in part (1 Corinthians 13:12), so, as Jesus taught in Matthew 6:10, we pray that God's Kingdom will come here on earth as it is in heaven.

但直到基督再来，我们只能看见和知道部分（哥林多前书 13:12）。所以，正如耶稣在马太福音 6:10 所教导，我们祈求神的国降临，在地上如同在天上一样。

Our prayers are prayers of expectation, but expectation whose reality will be exceeded.

我们的祷告是充满期待的祷告，但这期待到成为现实时，会超越原来所期待的。

Like the violinist who painstakingly practices, advancing slowly but surely, the mustard tree will be the largest in the garden; the leaven will work its way through an extraordinary amount of flour. And the result, beyond expectation. 就像小提琴手辛勤练习，缓慢但坚定地进步；芥菜树将成为花园里最大的树；面酵将渗透到大量面粉中。而结果，将超出预期。

This is BC Day weekend – a time to rest, relax, and enjoy Beautiful British Columbia.

这是卑斯日周末——一个休息、放松并享受美丽卑斯省的时光。

You may be tempted, as I am, to put your feet up and take a break. That's great.

你可能会像我一样，被引诱去翘起双腿，好好休息一下。这很好。

But be assured God neither slumbers nor sleeps – he is at work, even if we can't see the seed grow and the yeast work through the dough. 但请放心，即使我们看不到种子发芽，也看不到面酵在面团中发酵，上帝既不打盹也不睡觉——祂一直在工作。