



GPS GUIDE: NOVEMBER 14, 2021

Grow. Pray. Study

Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon: The Moral of the Story

Mark 4:26-33 (CEB)

Then Jesus said, “This is what God’s kingdom is like. It’s as though someone scatters seed on the ground, then sleeps and wakes night and day. The seed sprouts and grows, but the farmer doesn’t know how. The earth produces crops all by itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full head of grain. Whenever the crop is ready, the farmer goes out to cut the grain because it’s harvesttime.”

He continued, “What’s a good image for God’s kingdom? What parable can I use to explain it? Consider a mustard seed. When scattered on the ground, it’s the smallest of all the seeds on the earth; but when it’s planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all vegetable plants. It produces such large branches that the birds in the sky are able to nest in its shade.”

With many such parables he continued to give them the word, as much as they were able to hear.

Jesus' favorite speech form, the parable, was subversive. Parables sound absolutely ordinary: casual stories about soil and seeds, meals and coins and sheep, bandits and victims, farmers and merchants. As we hear these stories we listen and wonder about them, the stories lodge in our imagination, perplexing, confounding, disrupting, and inviting us to journey deeper in faith. Read today's parable and let it sit with you, wondering what Jesus is revealing about the kingdom of God.

Monday: Read Matthew 13:33

[Jesus] told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast, which a woman took and hid in a bushel of wheat flour until the yeast had worked its way through all the dough.”

I wonder if the loaf in this story has a name?
I wonder what the leaven might really be?
I wonder why the woman put the leaven in the loaf?
I wonder why Jesus told this story?
I wonder what this story says about the kingdom of heaven?

Prayer: I pray that the eyes of my heart will be enlightened to the wisdom and wonder of this story of faith. Amen.

Tuesday: Read Luke 10:25-37

A legal expert stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to gain eternal life?" Jesus replied, "What is written in the Law? How do you interpret it?" He responded, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus said to him, "You have answered correctly. Do this and you will live." But the legal expert wanted to prove that he was right, so he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. He encountered thieves, who stripped him naked, beat him up, and left him near death. Now it just so happened that a priest was also going down the same road. When he saw the injured man, he crossed over to the other side of the road and went on his way. Likewise, a Levite came by that spot, saw the injured man, and crossed over to the other side of the road and went on his way. A Samaritan, who was on a journey, came to where the man was. But when he saw him, he was moved with compassion. The Samaritan went to him and bandaged his wounds, tending them with oil and wine. Then he placed the wounded man on his own donkey, took him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day, he took two full days' worth of wages and gave them to the innkeeper. He said, 'Take care of him, and when I return, I will pay you back for any additional costs.' What do you think? Which one of these three was a neighbor to the man who encountered thieves?" Then the legal expert said, "The one who demonstrated mercy toward him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

I wonder if the person left by the side of the road half dead has a name?
I wonder who was a neighbor to the robber?... the priest?... the Levite?
I wonder why the legal expert asked Jesus "Who is my neighbor?"
I wonder who is my neighbor?
I wonder what this story says about the kingdom of God?

Prayer: I pray that the eyes of my heart will be enlightened to the wisdom and wonder of this story of faith. Amen.

Wednesday: Read Luke 14:7-15

When Jesus noticed how the guests sought out the best seats at the table, he told them a parable. "When someone invites you to a wedding celebration, don't take

your seat in the place of honor. Someone more highly regarded than you could have been invited by your host. The host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give your seat to this other person.' Embarrassed, you will take your seat in the least important place. Instead, when you receive an invitation, go and sit in the least important place. When your host approaches you, he will say, 'Friend, move up here to a better seat.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests. All who lift themselves up will be brought low, and those who make themselves low will be lifted up." Then Jesus said to the person who had invited him, "When you host a lunch or dinner, don't invite your friends, your brothers and sisters, your relatives, or rich neighbors. If you do, they will invite you in return and that will be your reward. Instead, when you give a banquet, invite the poor, crippled, lame, and blind. And you will be blessed because they can't repay you. Instead, you will be repaid when the just are resurrected." When one of the dinner guests heard Jesus' remarks, he said to Jesus, "Happy are those who will feast in God's kingdom."

I wonder how it felt to be invited to this great feast?
I wonder what it is like to feast in God's kingdom?
I wonder who I invite to eat with me?
I wonder why Jesus taught people to sit in the lowest place?
I wonder what this story says about the kingdom of God?

Prayer: I pray that the eyes of my heart will be enlightened to the wisdom and wonder of this story of faith. Amen.

Thursday: Matthew 13:44

"The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure that somebody hid in a field, which someone else found and covered up. Full of joy, the finder sold everything and bought that field."

I wonder what is so great about this treasure that this person sold everything they owed to have it?
I wonder how it feels to hold this treasure?
I wonder how many people passed by this treasure?
I wonder what treasure I might not see?
I wonder what this story says about the kingdom of heaven?

Prayer: I pray that the eyes of my heart will be enlightened to the wisdom and wonder of this story of faith. Amen.

Friday: Read Matthew 21:28-32

"What do you think? A man had two sons. Now he came to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' 'No, I don't want to,' he replied. But later he changed his mind and went. 'The father said the same thing to the other son, who replied, 'Yes, sir.' But he didn't go. 'Which one of these two did his father's will?'"

They said, “The first one.” Jesus said to them, “I assure you that tax collectors and prostitutes are entering God’s kingdom ahead of you. For John came to you on the righteous road, and you didn’t believe him. But tax collectors and prostitutes believed him. Yet even after you saw this, you didn’t change your hearts and lives and you didn’t believe him.”

I wonder why the first son said no to his father?

I wonder what the father feels waiting for the first son to come to the vineyard?

I wonder if the second son will ever change his mind?

I wonder how the brothers feel about each other?

I wonder what this parable says about the kingdom of God?

Prayer: I pray that the eyes of my heart will be enlightened to the wisdom and wonder of this story of faith. Amen.

Saturday: Read Matthew 18:23-30

“Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. When he began to settle accounts, they brought to him a servant who owed him ten thousand bags of gold. Because the servant didn’t have enough to pay it back, the master ordered that he should be sold, along with his wife and children and everything he had, and that the proceeds should be used as payment. But the servant fell down, kneeled before him, and said, ‘Please, be patient with me, and I’ll pay you back.’ The master had compassion on that servant, released him, and forgave the loan. “When that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him one hundred coins. He grabbed him around the throat and said, ‘Pay me back what you owe me.’ “Then his fellow servant fell down and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I’ll pay you back.’ But he refused. Instead, he threw him into prison until he paid back his debt.”

I wonder if the king has a name?

I wonder why the king forgave the servant’s debt?

I wonder what it felt like to be thrown in prison for debt you owed?

I wonder what debts we need to forgive?

I wonder what this story says about the kingdom of God?

Prayer: I pray that the eyes of my heart will be enlightened to the wisdom and wonder of this story of faith. Amen.