

**“Tell Me the Stories of Jesus
Parables that Challenge, Convict and Comfort”
“Precious Treasures”**

Things I’d like to remember from today’s sermon: **“Precious Treasures”**

Prayer for the Week

Most wonderful God, we approach you with our small lives, our tiny minds and our large ignorance, but also with our purest longings and hopes. We want to worship you with all that we have and are, but we look to you to encourage and assist us, because we know we will fail in this our holiest intention. Therefore please let your Spirit move in our hearts and minds, lifting us above things of secondary importance, and concentrating our whole being on your love and beauty. Through Christ Jesus who is the source of our confidence and the joy of our hearts desiring. Amen!

This week’s sermon may be viewed at <http://sundaystreams.com/go/firstwichita>

Study Guide

(This week’s Study Guide written by Pastor Rebecca Goltry Mohr)

Monday (7/17) Matthew 13:44

The gospel of Matthew is also known as the “accountant’s gospel.” Matthew has the most imagery of tax collectors, extensive lineage and numeric codes, things of status and the urban context is highlighted in great depth throughout the duration of Matthew’s gospel. In Matthew is where God reveals part of God’s identity through the birth of Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, meaning “God with us.” Skip forward to the text for today- God’s kingdom is right before our eyes! There are several probing questions that can be asked of this text, like- Who hid the treasure? What does it mean for an individual to invest in the kingdom of God? Do we have a generational response for sharing the treasure in the field with others? Has the church held too tightly to what we believe the kingdom of God is, without daily discernment with God? Although it is unsettling to some rubric abiding, task oriented thinkers, such as the meticulous author of Matthew,

God is working in the midst of these parables to shake things up by grabbing our attention to the alternative reign that is yet to come. *Merciful God- we seek you to lead us to pastures marked with the signs and works of your kingdom. Lord of Life it when we fell detached from your will, we pray that you will open our eyes anew to the grace-filled moments in life that are marked by the coming of your kingdom.*

Tuesday (7/18) Matthew 13:45-46

God has a tendency to radically alter and transform who we are as Christian believers. The merchant in search of fine pearls, undergoes a major transformation of identity after finding one pearl. After selling all the merchant has to buy one pearl, it is assumed that the owner of the pearl is no longer a merchant. Jesus Christ's life and ministry were the first fruits of the kingdom of God. Just as Christ's resurrection was a transformation that revealed the cosmic Christ, we are likewise transformed by the power of Christ's life, death and resurrection. The advent of the kingdom, sought for or not, brings about a reversal of values, leading to the crucial action that obtains the new. *Lord- we seek to be transformation people. Because of your Son Jesus Christ, we know the importance of the kingdom and have a taste of what is yet to come.*

Wednesday (7/19) Romans 8:12-13

Paul, in his candid teaching makes clear the choice of living a life of death/ flesh or a life by the Spirit. This dualism of life and death also appear with Moses in Deuteronomy 30:15,19. The Life and Death that Paul writes about is not focused on the individual but has to do with corporate salvation. Paul's magnitude of Life and Death have implications for humanity for the long haul. This urgency for transformation by the Spirit is in anticipation for Jesus' second coming, which they believed would be in their time. But here we still are, waiting. When Paul says, "we are debtors," the translation is more akin to, "we are obligated," but what is it that we are obligated to? In the words of Paul, we are obligated to live in righteousness as the passport to salvation or eternal life. Plainly put, the Holy Spirit fills us with righteousness. In a world that is cluttered with choices and obligations, we must turn to the Spirit of endurance to mobilize humanity as communities of righteousness that are a glimpse of life eternal. *Ever-present Spirit, we invite you into our hearts to stir things up - show us how to love God and neighbor with your transforming love. Amen.*

Thursday (7/20) Romans 8:14-17

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God, this is Good News indeed! Paul re-introduces hope and gives hints of kingdom life in unity with Father, Spirit and Son. In this text Paul brings concepts more closely attached to Israel to the forefront of the church at Rome. Typically, in the Old Testament, Israel was referred to frequently as God's child. "Inherited salvation" and promise of inherited land also relate to post exilic Jews. By the power of the Spirit, we are all given filial status with God. This language that was more familiar to Jews is now unlocked for Gentiles. What does being the sons and daughters of God mean for us today? Do we allow room at the table for all persons to know God's Spirit? *Mothering and Fathering God, we your children are grateful to be called yours, but please Holy Parent, teach us how to live according to your Spirit so that all may feel welcome and loved in your holy kingdom. Amen.*

Friday (7/21) Matthew 13:51-53

Congratulations to the disciples, for they understand Jesus parables! Often in the gospel texts the disciples are just a few steps behind and in some instances we wonder how the disciples were chosen if they weren't the brightest batch of learners. In this segment of scripture, Jesus commissions the disciples to share the good news about the kingdom of God. This calling of discipleship is one that requires an alternative way of living life on earth. What are some ways to allow the parables of Jesus to seep into your daily living? How can stories shared glorify God through our daily encounters with the divine? What are some tangible ways to be a scribe, or more simply put- to spread the good news of Christ out in the world today? *Holy Teacher, we are blessed to be your students, empower us to share your transformational gospel with other and to make our stories be beacons of light and hope in times of darkness. Amen.*