



This sermon series uses the image of a tree, from seed to sprout, to sapling, to fruit bearing and back to seedling for the next generation. As First Church ends 2019, we have the opportunity to look ahead to 2020 praying and working for a new vision, a new way of being in ministry at Third Street and Broadway. The year 2020 will be our 150th anniversary. Being good stewards of the gifts of those who have gone before us, means that those who follow us will have the resources available for years to come. Our tithes and gifts mean the daily, weekly and monthly ministry (and the bills that come with those ministries) are funded. We are all at different stages of our growth in our walk with Christ, but each of those stages have gifts to share. We begin with the image of seeds. The seed of faith is planted in Timothy and gratitude is the seed of faith that reminds us that all we receive is from God. May the seed of faith that is within us be nurtured this week.

Things I'd like to remember from today's sermon: **"Nurturing the Seed of Faith"**

Daily prayer: *O God, our source in all things, you have showered us with blessings. Help us to be rooted and established in your Word and your love so that we may be like trees planted by streams of water, yielding fruit in season. Pour out your spirit on us as your people and guide us in our praying, serving, giving and living. May we offer the best of our lives and gifts out of our faith in Jesus; it's in Christ's name we pray, Amen.*

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

Study Guide

Monday, October 14, 2019 2 Timothy 1: 6-7

This letter from Paul is filled with encouragement, faith, instruction and a bit of wistfulness. Over the next 6 weeks we will spend some time in this epistle. We often read verses 3-7 around Mother's Day, when we confirm young people or when they graduate. This focus is on the faith passed generation to generation. We did not read verses 3-5, but we note them here because it sets up Paul's reminder to Timothy to remember how the faith of his family is at work in him. They planted the seed and Paul is reviving that gift of God within Timothy. *Who planted the seed of faith in you? Was it a family member? Was it a teacher, mentor or preacher? Today, say a prayer of thanks for the one(s) who planted the seed of faith in you. Then ask how you can live out that faith day by day.*

Tuesday, October 15, 2019 2 Timothy 1: 8-10

Paul is trying to remind Timothy, that the seed of faith within him is what gives him courage and strength to follow Jesus. Paul is imprisoned and is suffering, and by the end of the letter is asking for Timothy to come as quickly as possible. However, he is continuing to lift up Timothy, reminding him that it is God who has saved and called each of them. It isn't because they are special, it is grace and that grace is known and experienced through Jesus. It is God's power at work to nourish the faith at work in our lives and to help it sprout and grow. All of us depend on God in both the good times and the bad times. *How do you see faith sprouting in new ways in your life and spirit? How is your faith growing in our community of faith?*

Wednesday October 16, 2019 2 Timothy 1: 11-14

Paul understood his calling. Before he became a follower of Jesus, he had everything and when he experienced Christ he turned his back on his past. As a teacher and preacher of the good news of Christ Paul knows joy and sorrow and suffering. Paul absolutely believes that one who planted that seed of faith within and trusts God will bring to harvest what God has started. "Guard the good treasure," or "protect this good thing placed in your trust." Even in prison, even in the midst of suffering Paul clings to that deep faith that God is at work and will nurture that seed already at work in him and in Timothy. *Do you have faith that God is still at work in you? in the church? Who are you being called to nourish and nurture in the faith? Are you planting seeds?*

Thursday October 17, 2019 Luke 17:11-14

I think in many ways, faith and gratitude are seeds that grow best together. Jesus again is traveling and is on the border between Galilee and Samaria. There, 10 "lepers" people with skin diseases that are not allowed in the community of faith shout to him and ask for mercy. Leprosy and other skin diseases required people to be ostracized and driven out of town. They couldn't see family or friends. They depended on people, family in particular, to leave food for them. It was harsh and hard. Jesus in seeing those in need and told them to go show themselves to the priests (which is how one regained entry to the community.) They were healed. What a gift! Seeds for a new life, back with their family and friends! *Has there been anything in your life that planted a new seed of hope and promise for your future? Have you planted any of those kind of seeds for others?*

Friday October 18, 2019 Luke 17: 15-19

Only one of the ten returned to thank Jesus. The only one who returned was a Samaritan. Perhaps, only those who understand what it is to be on the outside, treated badly, hated for their race and background understand true gratitude. The Samaritan didn't deserve that fresh leash on life but was given it. Like Paul, the Samaritan understood what a gift this seed, this faith, and this new opportunity for life was. *Today, as you pray our Stewardship prayer, ponder this good treasure, this good thing that God has given you. Ask how you nurture that seed that is at work in you and how you can nurture that seed in others.*