

# Pentecost #6

7-12-2020

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

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## Celebrate (Introduction)

“God’s word is like the rain that waters the earth and brings forth vegetation. It is also like the sower who scatters seed indiscriminately. Our lives are like seeds sown in the earth. Even from what appears to be little, dormant, or dead, God promises a harvest. At the Lord’s table we are fed with the bread of life, that we may bear fruit in the world.”

Opening Hymn: [“For the Beauty of the Earth”](#)

## Psalm 65:1-13

Praise is due to you,

O God, in Zion;

and to you shall vows be performed,

<sup>2</sup> O you who answer prayer!

To you all flesh shall come.

<sup>3</sup>When deeds of iniquity overwhelm us,  
you forgive our transgressions.

<sup>4</sup>Happy are those whom you choose and bring near  
to live in your courts.

We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house,  
your holy temple.

<sup>5</sup>By awesome deeds you answer us with deliverance,  
O God of our salvation;  
you are the hope of all the ends of the earth  
and of the farthest seas.

<sup>6</sup>By your<sup>[a]</sup> strength you established the mountains;  
you are girded with might.

<sup>7</sup>You silence the roaring of the seas,  
the roaring of their waves,  
the tumult of the peoples.

<sup>8</sup>Those who live at earth’s farthest bounds are awed by your signs;  
you make the gateways of the morning and the evening shout for joy.

<sup>9</sup>You visit the earth and water it,  
you greatly enrich it;  
the river of God is full of water;  
you provide the people with grain,  
for so you have prepared it.

<sup>10</sup> You water its furrows abundantly,  
settling its ridges,  
softening it with showers,  
and blessing its growth.  
<sup>11</sup> You crown the year with your bounty;  
your wagon tracks overflow with richness.  
<sup>12</sup> The pastures of the wilderness overflow,  
the hills gird themselves with joy,  
<sup>13</sup> the meadows clothe themselves with flocks,  
the valleys deck themselves with grain,  
they shout and sing together for joy.

**Hymn of Praise:** ["Let the Whole Creation Cry"](#)

### **Prayer of the Day**

"Almighty God, we thank you for planting in us the seed of your word. By your Holy Spirit help us to receive it with joy, live according to it, and grow in faith and hope and love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen."

**1<sup>st</sup> Reading:** [Isaiah 55:10-13](#)

**2<sup>nd</sup> Reading:** [Romans 8:1-11](#)

**The Gospel:** [Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23](#)

**Hymn of the Day:** ["Take My Life, That I May Be"](#)

Take my life, that I may be  
Consecrated, Lord, to thee;  
Take my moments and my days;  
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my silver and my gold,  
Not a mite would I withhold;  
Take my intellect, and use  
Ev'ry pow'r as thou shalt choose.

Take my love; my Lord, I pour  
At thy feet its treasure store;  
Take myself, and I will be  
Ever, only, all for thee.

**The Message:** ([Video](#))

During a time when social and political extremism seems to dominate a society and nation, it is almost impossible to hold any kind of rational dialogue no less come to any kind of common understanding. What has happened is that we do selective listening in our mental processing. We hear what we want to hear and block out that which doesn't support our mental mindset. Thereby, it becomes easy to fall into the trap that proven truths become lies and obvious lies become truth. This means that what is deemed as truth is attached only to the conceived acceptability or believability of the message. It comes down to the fact that the message, whether true or false, is believable so long as it fits within one's mindset. This means that one's freedom of being depends on whether listening happens with an open or closed mindset. Ultimately this determines the future course of a society or nation.

This is so important for us as individuals to understand for it determines how we live. Jesus clearly points this out in His parable of the soils or how we receive the message of God's kingdom of love and forgiveness. He states there are four kinds of soil which seed can fall upon or four kinds of listeners that God's word can reach.

First, there is the soil of the pathway that has been so hardened by being tread and trampled upon that a seed cannot find refuge in order to grow. It is crushed by travelers' feet or open to be food consumed by birds.

There is no chance for its roots to break the hardened soil and no chance for life in its future. So often we become hardened by all the negatives pressing down upon us; so burdened by feeling tread upon, taken advantage of, hurt, and being misled, that we just stop listening. We turn the outside world off by drawing within ourselves and shutting everybody out. We become like the seeds falling on the hardened pathway which finds no growth or life. This is exactly what happens to Jesus' message when we turn a deaf ear. There is no possibility or hope of a new life or possibility of living the new horizons of the kingdom of God's love.

Next is the seed which falls upon rocky soil. That is, soil that lightly covers a rock base or foundation. This seed will quickly germinate because of the warmth of the rock beneath it. There is much early growth and promise until the roots hit the rock in a futile search for moisture and nourishment. Life is short and the plant withers and dies.

Often we see vivid examples of this soil as we travel our everyday lives. The soil represents people who at first get all excited emotionally about something or some experience. They are all charged up only to find out what they were feeding upon was the emotion of the moment. When the emotion of the moment dies they quickly revert back to their past being. This is very evident within Christianity. People may get caught up in the emotion of a religious experience of only a shallow understanding and momentary commitment. When their understanding or commitment is challenged they are at a loss with nothing to feed them. They quickly fade into the sunset for there is no depth of belief only a brief emotional experience. If Christianity is only an emotional reaction, it leads to its corruption and failure and a dead end street for the individual.

Jesus then tells of the seed falling upon soil which also harbors seeds of thorns and weeds. The seed germinates and grows but so also the quick growing invasive thorns and weeds. Although the soil had the possibility of producing a bountiful harvest that possibility was compromise by the thorns and weeds. Naturally the weeds end up choking out the good plants. Every gardener is well aware of this.

The compromised soil illustrates one of the most difficult challenges we have as Christians. We must constantly evaluate our lives as to whether we harbor the weeds and thorns which drain our lives blocking the reality of God's message from growing and living through us. Do we live to seek selfish desires and wants which keep us from living the life in Christ? These are the weeds of the flesh as Paul relates. The total pursuit of these desires and wants leave little or no room for the pursuit of the kingdom of God. Christ is crowded out and we are strangled by the weeds of our making. There is little love beyond the love for self. But tragically this may just be a losing battle. Paul states, "To set the mind on the flesh is death." This can also be very true for a society. A society which only lives for itself without any regards for others is a society doomed for failure. The weeds which grow out of discontent and injustice will overtake that society.

Finally, Jesus comes to the good soil which is cultivated and free from damaging elements. He stated "Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty." The good soil produces all the good fruits of life and gives life to the good news of the kingdom of God. There is no room for hardness of heart, no room for shallow beliefs or the twisting of truth. There is no room for crowding out the true gifts of God's kingdom of love, hope, justice, and peace. But it does demand the commitment to make our lives free from all adverse conditions which may hamper living this life of God's love. It may even demand turning our societal life upside-down. It demands self-examination in order to rid ourselves of those obstructions which we may have allowed to drive our lives.

It must be made clear that there is no glamour or future in man's corruption of this God given life which we share with others. There is no future in planting the seeds of our future in fruitless pursuits. There is no future in denying love and justice to our fellow human beings. Our task is to open our lives to be that good soil by carefully listening and actually hearing the words of life given to us by Jesus. We must listen and prepare ourselves by clearing our lives of all that which can keep us from producing the good fruits of God's love.

Jesus concludes by saying "He who has ears to hear let him hear." Hear the message of Jesus and stop listening to those damaging words of false prophets which have only led us to the brink of disaster. They count on us being the hardened soil of the pathway, the shallow soil covering the rock, and the soil filled with the seeds of self at the expense of others. "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." We must continually prepare and cultivate the good soil in our lives so that we may witness to the good news and find the reality of the kingdom of God's eternal love.

**The Anthem:** ["Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring"](#) Agne Giedraityte

We give thee but thine own, what-e'er the gift may be; all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.

### **The Prayer**

Our Lord and God of all, we long to have the peace and justice which you have shown us through your love. Give us the courage and strength to open our lives to receive and live that which we so desperately need. In all of the mistrust and closed mindedness may we find the truth which only you can give. Let us not be misled by false prophets which can only destroy us. We turn to you for guidance and wisdom in order to live through these troubling times.

We pray for all those who are suffering from this pandemic and bring healing to those who have been hospitalized. Let us realize our part in helping to prevent the continuing spread of this deadly virus. Give strength and well-being to all medical personnel who are giving of themselves in the healing of those who are desperately ill..

We pray for all whole need your comforting an heeling presence especially Pam Ash, Heidi Brackbill, Parker Brennan, Billy Jean Eddy & family, the Elshafei family, Betty Fultz, Darrell Garrison, the John Family, Robert Karner, Ray Lambert, Donna Mayhew, Bev and Jim Mertz, Nic Nelson, Wendy Neumann, Elise Oliver, Peter Olsen, Dottie Reitz, Robert Reitz, Terre Rones, Paul Sagal, Colin Shea, Jerry Shea, Tommy Shimer, Jack Smith, the Spiegler family, Linda Stephens, Randy Stephens, Yongyin Sun, Esther and Buck Trautwein, Pastor Jack, and all those who are suffering pain, and sorrow as a result of this pandemic.

We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen

### **The Lord's Prayer**

#### **The Benediction**

The Lord bless you and keep you;

The Lord make His face shine upon you;

The Lord lift up His presence upon you and give you peace. Amen

And now my brothers and sisters

Live on knowing God's love,

The joy of living this life of love,

And the peace which only come through the power of His presence within you.

So live on in Love, Joy, Peace, and Power.

**Closing Hymn:** ["O Master Let Me Walk With Thee"](#)

\*Offering to be sent to:

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