



ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

THIS SUNDAY July 30 & BEYOND

Jesus' Seven Parables



What does Jesus mean by the “kingdom of heaven”? In Matthew’s gospel, Jesus gives us 7 parables aimed at answering those questions, and over the last couple of Sundays we’ve looked at the first 2. Since the remaining 5 parables are less involved and don’t come with specific interpretations, we get all of them in the gospel lesson for this Sunday (Matthew 13:31-33, 44-49a).

The parables of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven complete the picture the first 2 parables give of God’s Word settling in our hearts. It may start small, but once it’s received it will expand our whole being; so much so that our lives will begin to provide stability, peace, and rest for the world around us. Inevitable as this growth and expansion might seem, the 5th and 6th parables make it clear that when we encounter the kingdom of heaven, we have to respond and take action. In the parables, the “finding” of the treasure and the pearl trigger a dramatic sequence of events, where the men immediately go, sell all that they have, and buy the field or pearl.

Since the radical demands of the gospel are often what cause people to turn away from Jesus, it’s important to notice something here. Remember that Jesus *began* this sermon with 4 parables describing the beauty, promise, and potential of the kingdom in our lives. These 2 parables describe decisive action because those with ears to hear are tired of waiting for life to happen to them. Searching and *not* finding has enabled them to recognize in the kingdom what their hearts are truly searching for: the one thing that they can spend *everything* on, the one purpose that brings meaning to all of our experiences.

The kingdom can be ours, but, unlike the men in the parables, I think most of us have to make payments. We try to buy the field, but the merchant says, “Nope, not enough; I’m going to need that too,” and points to something we’d been holding back. Whether it’s something precious we want to keep or something painful we’re scared to let go of,

we have to decide if the treasure's worth more to us. Too often this is where people stop and then wonder why they're not experiencing all that Jesus promises. But if we keep choosing the kingdom, even if it takes a while, we can complete the deal. Then when we rush to the field, we'll find not only everything we'd hoped for, but also all that we handed over, now transformed by the beauty of the treasure.

The 7th parable on the nature of the final judgment cements this. The fish are separated, good from bad, but those Greek words can also be translated "beautiful" and "rotten." Whenever the enemy convinces us to hold something back from Jesus, it will rot, no matter how beautiful it might have been to start. All the world's unhappiness comes back to this, which is why we need to show in our lives that the kingdom is not about meeting Jesus' demands on our hearts, but satisfying our hearts' demands for Jesus.

Father J. D. McQueen II

CALENDAR

SUNDAY: 8:00a Low Mass (Church)
 10:30a Solemn Mass (Church)
 —*The entrance to the church is on 6th Avenue*—

Note: Child care is provided at the 8:00a, 10:30a Mass, Coffee Hour & Fellowship follow the Mass in the Parish Hall.

MONDAY 7:00p (AA) Doctors' Group (Fireside Room)

TUESDAY: Noon Mass (St. Mary's Chapel)

FRIDAY: 9:00a Morning Prayer (St. Mary's Chapel)
 9:30a Mass (St. Mary's Chapel)

AA Meetings

8:00p Ladies' Group (Fireside Room)
8:15p Men's Group (Parish Hall)

SATURDAY 11:00a Rosary in St. Mary's Chapel
 11:30a MASS in St. Mary's Chapel
 Noon Potluck Luncheon in the Parish Hall