

WORSHIP for July 12, 2020

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1) Please invite family or friends, who want to join us for live worship on Sundays @10:45am, to request access by emailing their name, email, & phone number to Pastor Janet.
- 2) Please have your Bible at hand for Worship each week!
- 3) To watch sermons recorded on Zoom on our YouTube Channel, go to the FPCP website: <https://www.fpcpataskala.com/> and click on WORSHIP or follow us on Facebook from the homepage.
- 4) Youth group for those entering 5th thru 12th grade at 3pm on Sunday: 7/26.

Prelude sung by the Wallace family women, "O Breath of Life"

Author: Bessie Ann Porter Head, 1920; Tune: Spiritus Vitae; public domain

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dcLzhsmlmG8>

Opening Hymn: "Come Ye Thankful People, Come"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=imK0j7eBJsc>

Call to Worship: Romans 8:14-17 *Unison*

Let us bring glory to Christ, the Son!

"For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory."

Prayer of Confession: Romans 8:12-13 *Unison*

"Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation – but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live." Lord, Jesus forgive our sin and turn us more and more toward you. Amen

(Pause for a time of silent confession.)

Assurance of Forgiveness: Romans 8:10-11 *Responsively*

“But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.”

We believe the good news of the gospel.

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

“The Gloria Patri”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dgcYD_m4OhU

Hymn of Preparation: “Great is Thy Faithfulness”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liQzzc41z5Q>

Call to God’s Word: *Unison*

“Scripture cannot be set aside... What does Scripture say?” John 10:35 & Romans 4:3.

Prayer for Illumination: *Unison*

Lord, through your Spirit enable us to consider your Word, and to enact it in our lives to bring you glory and praise. Amen.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 13:24-43 (NIV)

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=matthew+13%3A24-43&version=NIV>

SERMON: “Weeds, Birds, and Yeast” by *The Reverend Dr. Janet Hufford*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dnrAQxNvPls&list=PLAdy2hvW6PL93B6hbgswTxf93Evs575yd&index=2&t=0s>

SERMON: The sermon is “weeds, birds, and yeast,” because in today’s reading there are these 3 parables in total. Remember that a parable is a story that is held side by side with another story.

Today’s story of the weeds is a sequel, paired with that from last week, where “a certain farmer” spread seed even onto unprepared soil, rocky and thorny ground and along paths of foot traffic, “wasting” $\frac{3}{4}$ of his seed. Now to make matters worse, in this sequel an enemy sows seeds of weeds among the good seeds of wheat!

This sequel starts to convey a triple metaphor of bad things interfering with the kingdom: seeds of weed, birds among mustard plants, and yeast worked through dough.

First, as already mentioned, there are the seeds of weeds. Then those pesky birds who ate up the seed in last week’s parable show up again to make their home in the branches of the mustard tree. BTW, there are plenty of mustard plants growing all along the sea of Galilee where Jesus told the parables. I saw the fields ripe with yellow flowers when I journeyed there at the start of Lent in 2008. But something to note is that mustard seeds do not actually grow into trees. At best they grow into bushes. So whatever appeared in parable of the mustard seed is a counterfeit tree and the birds living in its branches are not citizens of the kingdom, even though they act like they belong.

Besides the seeds of weeds worked through the garden and the birds living in the mustard "tree," today's 3rd parable tells of yeast worked through the dough. Now for we who love the smell of freshly baked yeast bread (and perhaps also bird lovers), it may be difficult to understand how these are bad. I remember once going for training of a children's curriculum that included this parable of the yeast. The trainer admitted that since she could not understand the parable that teachers may want to just ignore it. My spiritual antennae immediately heard a warning from Scripture to not to add to or to take away from God's word. This is the last warning in the Bible! Know that the key rule for Biblical interpretation is that Scripture interprets Scripture. In practicing that key rule, how is yeast referenced in Scripture? Any devote Jewish person could answer that question without hesitation! For preparation for Passover meals requires meticulously removing all yeast from the house, sweeping every dark corner with a feather to clean out every little crumb. This practice recalls that in order for the Hebrews to make their escape from Egypt with Pharaoh's army soon to follow, there was not time for bread to rise. So, Passover bread is matzah, flat bread without yeast. Matzah bread still used for Passover today.

Consider, too, that last week we heard that Jesus changed his pattern of earthly ministry, refusing to fulfill the Pharisees and Sadducees demands for a sign from heaven. In his ministry, Jesus has already shown many signs, but the religious leaders still would not believe Jesus' preaching & teaching. Therefore, after Jesus' parables in ch. 13, which we'll continue to hear into next week, in ch. 16 Jesus twice cautions his disciples, "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." He explains that the yeast is "the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

Here now we can understand how the 3 parables of weeds, birds, and yeast are warnings for disciples of Christ, to be on guard against false teachers and teachings, counterfeiting as truth, worked even through the church, masquerading as belonging to the kingdom.

Then after Jesus tells the 3 parables in today's passage, he explains the first one, the parable of the weeds, the sequel to last week's parable of sowing. Just as those who heard the parable of the sower might wonder why so much seed was seemingly wasted, the servants of the owner (who is "a certain farmer") want to know if they should pull up the weeds from among the wheat. However, tares or darnel weed is difficult to distinguish from immature heads of wheat. Therefore, the owner's decision to wait until the wheat heads all mature at harvest is good. For once the heads of wheat mature, they will show obvious fruit that can be harvested. At harvesttime then weeds without fruit can be collected and burned so as not to be a threat to later crops.

While some weeds like thorns are clearly distinguished, not all are. Like we do not know the condition of all the soils, we do not always know what is wheat and what is tares. Further, just as the farmer is good & generous, spreading the seed of the kingdom over all the earth, the farmer is also patient. He patiently waits for the time of the harvest, allowing enough time for fruit to be revealed. Consider 2Peter 3:8-9: "But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

God is also kind. Consider Rm 2:1-4: “You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. Now we know that God’s judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. So when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God’s judgement? Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?” Goodness, patience, and kindness are all characteristics of God. They are all fruit of the Spirit.

Today’s parables, especially that of the weeds, exhorts us to recognize God’s goodness, patience, and kindness, and to display these fruit of the Spirit in us. But God’s goodness, patience, and kindness is for the purpose of allowing sufficient time for our repentance. Of what “weeds, birds, and yeast” do we need to turn from and repent? May the fruit of the Spirit & of the kingdom be evident in us. May we show ourselves to be neither counterfeits of weeds, birds, nor yeast, but true citizens of the Kingdom. God help us, we pray. Amen.

Hymn of Response: “There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l5LN1ZvwWfs>

PRAYERS OF JOYS & CONCERNS, FOLLOWED BY THE LORD’S PRAYER: *Unison*

Please contact Pastor Janet by email, text, or phone with prayer requests.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Please Continue to Give in Dedication to Our Lord and Savior, Jesus

Prayer Of Dedication: *Unison*

God, in view of your mercy help us to offer ourselves as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to you, O God. Amen. *Romans 12:1*

Doxology

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HqpXWF15avU>

Closing Hymn: “Thy Loving Kindness”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JlIGU0qYBbk>

Benediction: *Responsively*

Go now in the fruit of the patience, kindness, and goodness of God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, to show forth signs of the kingdom of heaven to the world.

Amen.

Please join together again in worship on Zoom next Sunday!