

“Teach us, O Lord, in your way  
so we may walk  
in your truth.” AMEN!

Most of us know Jesus’ preferred way to teach  
about the kingdom, or reign, of God on earth  
was through parables.

He could have said, “You see the kingdoms of Rome,  
God’s is better than that because...

But, he didn’t do it that way.

He told parables and explained some of them  
(like today’s) to his closest followers.

Jesus told his listeners many things about God,  
and the things God was doing,  
through these parables.

Still today, Jesus teaches us many things  
through parables, too.

I say all this because last week, today, and  
the next few Sundays are all parabolic  
teachings from Jesus.

Stories with analogies, metaphors, and allegories.

We gain wisdom from them.

We identify God, Jesus, and ourselves in them.

And with each reading, our goal is  
to interpret them with fresh eyes  
to understand a little more  
than we did before,

but in order for parables to be parables  
they must unsettle us.

Help us understand a little more, yes, but  
also leave us with a little mystery and wonder.

In other words, we don't want to study the trees  
so much that we miss seeing the forest. (Pause)

This lesson is best learned from this story...

David and Samuel had known one another for years.

Samuel was the strong one.

Quick with laughter, and  
steady in his counsel.

He'd fill a room with wisdom and warmth.

But, now he rarely spoke and his eyes  
only opened for short periods of time.

He had moments of awareness  
with fragmented words.

The room where Samuel lay for the last  
several weeks had grown quieter each day,  
but it was never silent.

The soft rhythm of breathing,  
the gentle hum of machine, and  
the occasional creak of the chair where  
David sat next to the bed,  
those were the continued sounds.

David was there everyday.

He came with purposes.

Take notes, read prayers, adjust pillows,  
track medications, and ask the nurses questions.

"Water," Samuel whispered.

"Here," David would respond carefully lifting the cup.

Each day became a checklist.

Did he eat?

Did he sleep?

Had the doctor come?

Were medications administered on time?

It was these details that kept David so focused  
that he scarcely noticed the  
slow unfolding of something larger.

One afternoon, an older nurse paused at the doorway.

She had been watching David do his tasks.

“You’re a good friend,” she whispered.

Without looking up, David nodded and said,  
“I don’t want to miss anything.”

The nurse came closer so no one else could hear.

“Sometimes,” she said.

“We hold so tightly to the tasks  
that we miss the person.”

David stopped.

That evening, he sat more quietly and  
held Samuel's hand.

No notebook. No checklist. Just closeness.

Samuel stirred and opened his eyes.

For a moment they were clear —  
clear in a way they  
hadn't been in days.

"David," Samuel said.

"I'm here," David replied.

Samuel studied him a moment,  
not with urgency, but with a kind of  
peaceful recognition.

Smiling gently, Samuel whispered clearly.

"You've always been here."

David felt something shift in his chest.

Not just today.  
Not just the tasks.  
But all of it.  
The years.

The shared meals.  
The prayers.  
The laughter.  
The burdens carried together.

The forest.

The tears came before he could stop them.

“I’ve been so focused on getting  
everything right, Samuel,” David said softly.

“I didn’t want to fail you.”

Samuel’s eyes closed, his lips curved slightly,  
and a tear fell.

“You didn’t. You never have.”

The long pause filled the room,  
not with emptiness but with presence.

As they held hands, David noticed  
the warmth of Samuel’s thin hand.

He noticed the rise and fall of his breath  
as something sacred, not something to monitor.

And he noticed the quiet peace

that had settled in the room,  
as though God had drawn near and  
taken up residence.

The details weren't neglected but they  
were no longer the center.

The center was love, presence, the long story  
written between them, now coming to an  
earthly close.

Days later, when Samuel died,  
David was there hand in hand with him and  
when people asked how he'd endured it,

he said, "I almost missed it, because I was trying  
to do everything right.

But thanks to others, I learned to see the whole of it.

The gift of walking someone home.

I got to see the forest through the trees. (Pause)

I treasure this story as a reminder for us  
to see the forest in our lives and not miss

the forest of this parable of good and bad seeds.

We can focus on the weeds, or on the evil one  
who sowed them.

We might even focus on the judgment at the end,  
or the deep worry we might have about  
imposters around us.

These are important details to not neglect,  
but they shouldn't be the center, I don't think.

The center for me today are the ways  
this parable speaks to our spiritual life.

The ways that each of us have  
both wheat and weeds in us that grow.

May the wheat in us grow in abundance. (Pause)

As was wonderfully discussed at our  
last adult confirmation class.

We can be inspired to do good things and  
we can be inspired to do not-so-good things.

These conversations with one another teach us  
about the kingdom of God right here on earth  
and happening right now.



Inspiring us to do good things.

That God's redemption is not only  
for human beings but  
for creation as a whole.

And our solidarity with God's  
creation is a benefit for us.

We don't want to miss it.

We groan inwardly, waiting on tiptoe for  
what God will do next.

And as we groan, so too does creation, and  
so too does God's Holy Spirit.

There is no other rock like our God.

AMEN!