

## WORSHIP DEVOTIONAL

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Fresno, CA

July 12, 2020

Sixth Sunday of Pentecost

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

*You may make the sign of the cross; the sign marked at baptism.*

Blessed be the holy Trinity, +one God,  
whose steadfast love is everlasting,  
whose faithfulness endures from generation to generation.

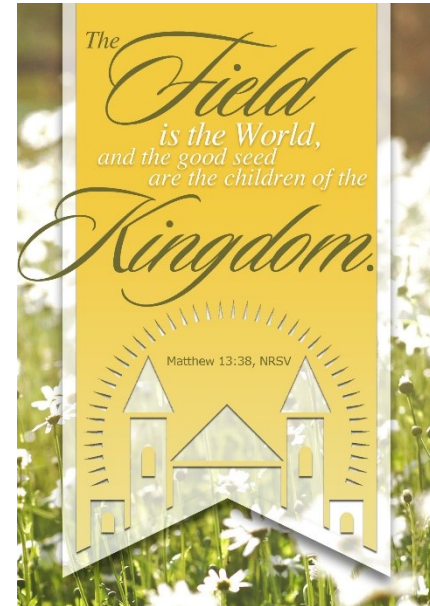
**Amen.**

Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Reconciling God,  
**we confess that we do not trust your abundance,  
and we deny your presence in our lives.  
We place our hope in ourselves  
and rely on our own efforts.  
We fail to believe that you provide enough for all.  
We abuse your good creation for our own benefit.  
We fear difference and do not welcome others  
as you have welcomed us.  
We sin in thought, word, and deed.  
By your grace, forgive us;  
through your love, renew us;  
and in your Spirit, lead us;  
so that we may live and serve you in newness of life.  
Amen.**

Beloved of God,  
by the radical abundance of divine mercy  
we have peace with God through +Christ Jesus,



through whom we have obtained grace upon grace.  
Our sins are forgiven.  
Let us live now in hope.  
For hope does not disappoint,  
Because God's love has been poured into our hearts  
through the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

### **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.**

### **FIRST LESSON**

Isaiah 55:10-13

New Revised Standard Version

<sup>10</sup> For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,  
and do not return there until they have watered the earth,  
making it bring forth and sprout,

giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,  
<sup>11</sup> so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;  
it shall not return to me empty,  
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,  
and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

<sup>12</sup> For you shall go out in joy,  
and be led back in peace;  
the mountains and the hills before you  
shall burst into song,  
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

<sup>13</sup> Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;  
instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle;

and it shall be to the LORD for a memorial,  
for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

## **SECOND LESSON**

Romans 8:1-11

### **Life in the Spirit**

**8** There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit<sup>[a]</sup> of life in Christ Jesus has set you<sup>[b]</sup> free from the law of sin and of death. <sup>3</sup> For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin,<sup>[c]</sup> he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.<sup>[d]</sup> <sup>5</sup> For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit<sup>[e]</sup> set their minds on the things of the Spirit.<sup>[f]</sup> <sup>6</sup> To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit<sup>[g]</sup> is life and peace. <sup>7</sup> For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, <sup>8</sup> and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

<sup>9</sup> But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit,<sup>[h]</sup> since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. <sup>10</sup> But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit<sup>[i]</sup> is life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup> If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ<sup>[j]</sup> from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through<sup>[k]</sup> his Spirit that dwells in you.

## **GOSPEL**

Matthew 13:1-9

### **The Parable of the Sower**

**13** That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. <sup>2</sup> Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. <sup>3</sup> And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup> And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. <sup>5</sup> Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no

depth of soil. <sup>6</sup> But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. <sup>7</sup> Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. <sup>8</sup> Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. <sup>9</sup> Let anyone with ears<sup>[a]</sup> listen!”

Matthew 13:18-23

### **The Parable of the Sower Explained**

<sup>18</sup> “Hear then the parable of the sower. <sup>19</sup> When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. <sup>20</sup> As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; <sup>21</sup> yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>22</sup> As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. <sup>23</sup> But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

### **SERMON**

#### **THE REAL HOLY LAND**

***Preaching text: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23***

The place where our gospel happened is a place called Capernaum. I’ve had the opportunity to be there twice. In the late 90’s my dad and I led a couple of groups from our churches to the Holy Land. It was a fascinating experience.

Our gospel begins by saying, “Jesus left the house.” That house was Peter the disciples house. The gospel says, “Jesus went to the lakeside where he sat down to teach.” In Jesus’ day when rabbis sat down it indicated a great lesson was coming.

But the crowd was so big Jesus got into a boat while the people stood on shore. Like I said, I’ve been there. It is interesting to know that just a short distance from the foundation of Peter’s house (which is still there by the way) there is a natural amphitheater. It happens because on the Sea of Galilee there the water acts as a natural P.A. system. It has been estimated that as many as 10,000 people could have heard Jesus in that setting!

The important truth Jesus shared was the “Parable of the Sower.” Jesus said “Once there was a man who went out to sow grain. Some of the grain fell on the path.” We walked some of those paths that have supposedly been there for centuries.

Those were wonderful trips. I’d love to go back sometime. I saw some of the most holy places on earth to believers from the world’s three greatest religions. There were Christians, Muslims and Jews all praying or meditating or singing at the different places. To many in our groups it was a very holy experience. But what really bothered me was how willing people are to kill each other over these “holy” places! Here we were, in the holiest places, where the Creator had given divine revelation of one sort or another, and the creation (us) are destroying each other to get a piece of it. It must really make God sad when we turn God given gifts into reasons to hate each other.

Jesus said some of the seed fell on rocky ground. Israel is a land of incredibly large numbers of rocks. In fact, there is a legend that when God was creating the world God sent four angels, each with a large sack of rocks to distribute throughout the earth. But when they were above Israel rips appeared in three of the bags so  $\frac{3}{4}$ 's of the world’s rocks landed there.

Jesus then said some seed fell in the area where thorn bushes grow. There is a lot to be worried about these days. We have a pandemic, everything including employment for many is up in the air, racism is rearing its ugly head again, there is no shortage of worries.

And some of the seed fell on good soil.

Then Jesus explains the parable. He says the seed is God’s Word, and people are like the four kinds of soils.

Some people are like the path. They are hard. God’s Word doesn’t even begin to penetrate. Nothing happens. It makes no difference in who they are.

Jesus said others are like the rocky soil. God’s Word takes root and people receive it gladly. But then trouble or persecution comes, and because there is no depth, they give up.

Third, Jesus said some people are like the earth with the thorn bushes. They too receive God’s Word with open hearts but the worries of this life and the love of riches choke everything else out.

And finally, Jesus says some people are like the good soil. I think of that as the true Holy Land! They receive God's Word, understand it, and bear fruit 100 ... 60 ... or 30-fold! Their lives are productive and full.

Now the question is, what kind of soil are we? Which type best describes where you are in your faith? Are you like the path? The rocky soil? The thorny soil? Or the good soil?

Now, if you are not the good soil do not worry! Remember the name of this parable is "The Parable of the Sower." This is not primarily a teaching about us. It is a teaching about God!

Notice that the sower threw seed everywhere! He didn't hold back. He didn't ration it. He threw it everywhere. God just loves to give!

We are still in the season of Pentecost when we remember the Holy Spirit. You can think of God's Holy Spirit like a rototiller. The Holy Spirit breaks up the path. The Holy Spirit digs deep into the rocky soil. The Holy Spirit weeds out the thorns. And the Holy Spirit brings forth an amazing harvest, 100 or 60 or 30-fold.

So, whatever you may see yourselves as today, know that God isn't through with you yet! The Sower wants each of us to be Holy Land!

**AMEN.**

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

**Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.**

Lord God, in our Old Testament lesson, the prophet Isaiah declares the joy in creation when the proclamation of the gospel accomplishes its purpose. In the Matthew lesson, Jesus compares that proclamation to seed sown in the earth. The Good News of God's kingdom goes out like seed scattered. It doesn't all hit its target and produce fruit, but the first task is to spread it abroad. Lord, make us faithful sowers of your Good News. ***Lord in your mercy...***

In Romans, Saint Paul explains the transformation that takes place in believers once the Spirit of God dwells within. He says, *"If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit..."* Give us courage to spread seed to others for new life. Prosper God's Church on earth in its proclamation of the Gospel. ***Lord in your mercy...***

We pray for our nation, state and city, our president, governor, mayor, and the leaders of the world. Open our eyes and ears to what the Spirit is saying to the Church and all creation today. May the soil that you have prepared receive with joy the Good News of salvation...Isaiah describes the joy throughout creation when the soil is receptive, saying, *"The mountains and hills...shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands...It shall be a memorial, an everlasting sign."* Lord, we know it is your desire that all come to know you and live with you forever. Our Earth needs your Good News now more than ever. ***Lord in your mercy...***

Remember this congregation, its pastor, and people, as we share the love of Jesus. Prepare good soil. Touch those who have asked for prayer with healing, comfort, and renewal. Give strength to those who continue to fight the pandemic and to fight for liberty. We lift to you those in our hearts today...***Lord in your mercy...***

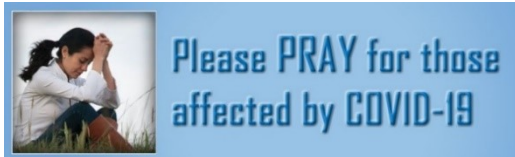
Saint Paul begins his chapter with these comforting words, *"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."* We cling to that promise, in Jesus name, we pray. ***Amen***

CAROLYN LINN

## PRAYER CONCERNS

### Members in Need of Prayer:

Karla Sutton  
Gloria Miller  
David Adamcik  
Mary & Patrick Norris and  
Children Alex, Isaac, and Michelle  
Paul Werfelmann  
Juana & Anthony On &  
Extended Family  
Richard & Kay Schumacher  
Karen Kubar  
Irene Pierini  
Jocelyn Miller  
Arlene Robbins  
Kirsten Linder  
Stacy Lairson  
Jim Thompson  
Addie Dornbusch  
Neil & Verna Walden  
Karl & Pauline Ritterbush  
Chris Dueker  
Connie Alvarado  
Susan Berg



### Family and Friends:

Phil Chavez  
Linda Franklin  
Candice Frost (Margie Kinler's Grand-  
daughter) & her friend Sharon Ferris  
Mickey Paulo  
Janet Sharp  
Barbara Lester  
Kelley Kim  
Jade Dixon  
Craig Cefre (Autumn's boyfriend's Dad)  
Anthony Chollicho  
Jo Thune & Family  
Kim Carlson  
Denise Maxwell (The Wilk's sister-in-law)  
John Sharpe  
Melissa Melton  
Kim Boren & Family  
Jeff Conner  
Judie Meadows  
Joan Rollin  
Margie Poole  
Sandy Robbins  
Kathy Christiansen  
Arlynn Turnquist  
Amy Conley  
Mike D  
Michael Horne  
Dee Dee Mello  
Betty Synder  
Alexi Arstein





# The Lord's Prayer

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 trespasses,

As we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,

But deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,

and The power, and the glory,

For ever and ever.

Amen

Matthew 6:9-13

*... those who* **Live**  
**According**  
*to the* **Spirit**

set their  
*minds*  
on the things of  
*the Spirit.*

*Romans 8:5*

**Kathy has included a page for taking notes while you go through the Worship Devotional and a page to color. It has been found that coloring reduces stress and calms a person.**

# {sermon notes}

sermon title: \_\_\_\_\_ { date: \_\_\_\_\_ }

## { notes }

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{ key verses }

{ worship songs }



## { prayers }

**SPREAD**



**NOT  
GERMS**

**STAY IN PEACE! SERVE THE LORD! WASH YOUR HANDS! THANKS BE TO GOD!**

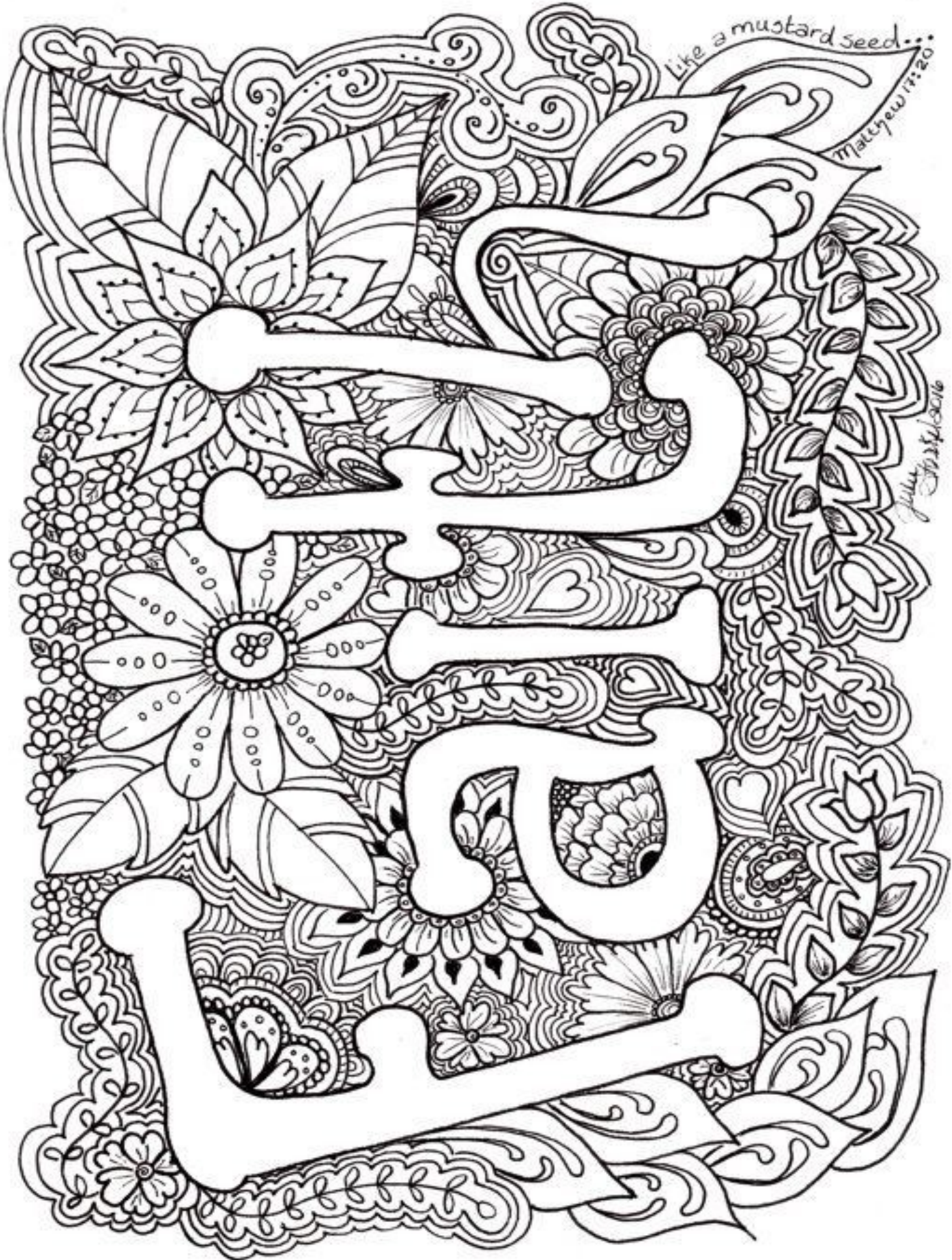
Our mission statement:

**SHARING THE LOVE OF JESUS**



Like a mustard seed...

Matthew 17:20



Julia  
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