

The Parables of Jesus

Immanuel Lutheran Church
Sebewaing, Michigan



— THE SEASON OF —
LENT

Lent Devotions 2026
By Pastor Boyer

Dear Reader,

These Lent devotions take you through the parables of Jesus. Parables are simple stories told by Jesus with a deeper meaning. At the center of each parable is Jesus and His great compassion for sinners. The parables of Jesus remind us of His deep desire to save us from our sins. It is my hope that these devotions aid your Lenten meditation on Jesus, our crucified Savior.

In Jesus,
Pastor Boyer

Wednesday, February 18

Patching an Old Garment (Matthew 9.16, Mark 2.21, Luke 5.36)

Here we begin the parables of Jesus, but this might seem like an odd parable. Jesus says, “No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch tears away from the garment, and a worse tear is made (Matthew 9.16).” But what does Jesus mean by this parable?

In typical parable fashion the interpretation may not seem obvious to us. Jesus speaks this way for those in the know, that they may know. And that those who don’t understand, won’t understand.

This is a sober warning to the hearers of this parable. You can’t just fit Jesus into your system- it won’t work. You can’t stitch Jesus into the Mosaic law or Temple rituals. Jesus has not come to be another piece of the Jewish culture. Trying to do this will destroy the whole thing.

Nor has Jesus come to be something secondary. The patch on the garment is only a small piece. Jesus is more, much more than that. The disciples of John and the Pharisees hoped that they could fit Jesus into their system. Maybe if they grafted Him in the right way... Jesus refuses to fit into their conceptions.

Jesus must have preeminence. When Jesus comes the entire Old Testament Temple system is fulfilled in Him. He has not come to patch it. He is what the sacrifices in the Temple pointed toward. Do the disciples of John understand? Jesus is all in all. He is God. He has come to redeem sinners from the curse of their sins. All the promises in the Old Testament pointed to Him and Him alone.

So what should we do? Make Jesus the primary thing in our lives. Don’t try to stitch Him in a little, but He must dominate our lives. We live through Him and make our being in Him. We are forgiven and nurtured in Him through Word and Sacrament. We follow Him where He leads no matter what. He is everything for us!

Prayer: Father, You sent Your Son to fulfill the law and redeem sinners. Grant me to place Jesus where He should be in my life- let my life revolve around Him. In His Name. Amen.

Thursday, February 19

New Wine in Old Wineskins (Matthew 9.17, Mark 2.22, Luke 5.37-38)

The old wineskins will burst, tear, and spill should they be filled with new wine. This parable is much like the previous one. The old covenant cannot hold the new. The new stands alone. No longer are the Day of Atonement, Passover, Seder Meal, circumcision, or Temple rituals necessary. The new is here; the new is Jesus.

But there will be a spilling. Jesus will spill out His blood on the tree for sinners. He will pour this blood out in the Supper, this new covenant will be cut in, through, by His blood. Can the Old Testament covenant hold all this? No. A new covenant is made between God and man.

This new covenant has man doing nothing. God does all. Jesus comes and lives under the law. He takes on Himself sin and travels to the tree. He hangs for the sins of sinners as He pays the price for your sins with His suffering and death. The price is paid before the Father. The wrath poured out on Jesus. It is done. God dies for sinners, for you.

What is your reaction? Shall you tear your clothes in rage as the High Priest, proclaiming that Jesus cannot be the Christ? Shall you stand as the centurion at the foot of the cross and confess? Is the bloody death of the Christ enough for you?

His death and the benefits thereof are given to you in the ways He prepared. He offers you water to wash your sins away in Baptism. He speaks His Word to you to cleanse you and declare you forgiven. He brings His body and blood to you that you would receive Him for the forgiveness of your sins. Is this enough? Jesus does all. He makes all things new for you. He forgives you through His blood.

Prayer: Father in heaven, I thank You that You sent Jesus to die in my place on the tree. Grant me faith to trust and hope to believe all that Jesus has done for me. In His Name. Amen.

Friday, February 20

A Lamp on a Stand (Matthew 5.14-15)

A lamp is lit to give light. Why light the lamp and then hide it so no one can benefit from the light? There is no logical reason to do that! And this is the point Jesus is making.

Jesus has come to be the light of the world. He has come to do what the Father sent Him to do. He has come to take on sin and be the perfect sacrifice under the wrath of the Father. He has come to die that sinners would not die, but live. He has come to seek and save the lost. This all makes sense. Jesus has come for this purpose and it would be foolish if He did not accomplish it.

So also are you the light of the world. Jesus says to His disciples, “You are the light of the world.” And you are His disciples now. You are that light now, so act like it. It would make no sense for you to be forgiven by Jesus and receive the death He died in your place and then begin living like Jesus didn’t matter to you. Live like you are the light.

But what does it mean that we should live like we are the light? Jesus had a purpose to fulfill here and so do you. Your purpose is not to die on a tree and pay for the sins of others. What then? Consider your place in life by those around you. Who do you see daily? Children, spouse, grandkids, grandparents? So be the light of the world to them. Serve them as you have been served by Christ. Love them as you have been loved by Christ. Help them, support them, pray for them, encourage them in their daily walk. Who else? Neighbors, brothers and sisters in Christ, strangers. Be the light of the world for them.

You have been put in this place and time for a purpose. God knows your gifts and talents and how you can use them to benefit others. So be the light that others would see the light and be led to the true light—even Jesus.

Prayer: Father, Your Son is the light of the world and through Him I am saved. Grant me to reflect that light to all those around me that they would see my Jesus and rejoice with me. In His Name. Amen.

Saturday, February 21

Wise and Foolish Builders (Matthew 7.24-27, Luke 6.47-49)

Jesus is the foundation. Building on Him and His Words is the solid ground. So do the Words of Jesus. Listen to them and put them into practice.

How are the Words of Jesus done? Believe that He is the Christ, the Son of God, who has come into the world. Trust that His death on the tree has saved you from all your sins. His Word speaks it, His Word is truth. But this is not the end. You must live these Words of Jesus.

Be in worship. Receive Jesus often! Drown your sins daily through your Baptism. Study His Word and know it. Receive the Supper often. Be with your brothers and sisters in Christ. Encourage them and support them. Help and support your neighbor, whoever they might be, in whatever need they may have.

Here is the solid foundation- build on Jesus, who He is and what He has done for you. This shows that you believe that He is your Lord and you desire to serve Him in His kingdom.

Of course, there is the other way. To build not on Jesus, but on that shifting sand. To build on self or ability or pride or money or health or any of those things the world values so greatly. To build one’s life on these things will bring only a sad end.

None of those things the world so values are able to save one nor can than they be taken with us after death. They will be all left here on earth. It might look good, like builders constructing a glorious house, but in the end it all comes to nothing.

Consider carefully and build on Jesus. He is the rock, the foundation. Through Him alone shall sinners be saved. So build on Him and encourage others that they also would be found in Christ.

Prayer: Father in heaven, Your Son is the solid foundation. Grant me to build on Him that others would see my words, actions, and life and come to a knowledge of Jesus too. In His Name. Amen.

Sunday, February 22

The Moneylender who Forgives Unequal Debts (Luke 7.41-43)

A sinful woman had just been forgiven. She had somehow managed to gain entry to the dinner a Pharisee had given. This woman anointed Jesus' feet and wiped them with her hair. Clearly, this woman loved Jesus. She came to Him, knowing her sins and seeking forgiveness.

Jesus tells this parable to show the Pharisees how much this woman knew about her sins. No doubt, she had people tell her daily how sinful she was. She knew that she did not measure up to the holy standards of God's law. She knew she needed help so she sought out Jesus.

The Pharisees knew the law very well. But they also thought that they kept the law perfectly. What more could they do? They were better than others- like this sinful woman! In comparison they seemed better, even holier.

But the law does not work that way. The law does not compare people and declare one better or worse. The law takes the individual and demands perfection of him or her. There is no way around the strict demands of the law. The Pharisee who threw the dinner party had no love for Jesus. He even broke the eighth commandment thinking ill of Jesus. He did not love his neighbor for he did not provide the basics of hospitality for his guests.

He thought his debt was little so he loved little. The sinful woman knew that her debt was huge so she loved much. This is what the law is meant to do- show us our sins. The more we know the depths of our need the more we love and appreciate what Jesus has done for us.

Like the sinful woman, know the law. Know the depths of your sins. What can you do to make them up before a holy God? What could you give or do? Nothing. Seek Jesus. Fall before Him confessing your sins and know that He is loving and merciful. He forgives.

Prayer: Father, in love You sent Your Son to die for me. Grant me to rightly know the law and thus appreciate all that Jesus has done for me. Having my great debt of sin forgiven, grant me to love. In His Name. Amen.

Monday, February 23

Lamp on a Stand (Mark 4.21-22, Luke 8.16, 11.33)

Jesus has not come into the world for some secret purpose. There is no top secret information that Jesus is giving out. Rather, His purpose has been revealed since Adam and Eve sinned in the garden. This purpose was revealed to Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. The people of Israel heard of this through prophets, priests, and even kings. This is not a top secret mission.

Jesus has not been hiding His teachings. He has been out among the people. They follow and He teaches. He does miracles and speaks parables among them. They know Him. He does not teach in dark allies or hidden rooms. He gives no secret wisdom. What Jesus has to give is for all.

Nothing is hidden except to be made manifest. The disciples might not understand what Jesus has come to do (although Jesus tells them repeatedly). But eventually they will see. Jesus has come to give His life on the tree. He dies out in the open for all to see. He dies in history, in time and place that no one should doubt. Here the purpose is made manifest.

Is a lamp brought in and put under a bed? No! Jesus will not remain hidden either. While sinners plot against Him or try to kill Him, Jesus continues. He teaches. He gathers. He heals, forgives, and saves. Jesus still does all this, He has not stopped.

Jesus still openly calls sinners to repent through His Word of law. He still forgives sinners who are repentant with His Word. He still washes sins away through Baptism. He even feeds and nourishes with His very body and blood. All this Jesus does openly for you.

So don't hide your faith. Live it. Jesus openly saved you. So, live as a Christian that others would see and be pointed to the hope you have in your Savior.

Prayer: Father in heaven, Jesus lived and died openly for me. Grant me to live my life openly for Him that others would see and believe. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Tuesday, February 24

Rich Man Foolishly Builds Bigger Barns (Luke 12.16-21)

One's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. The rich man in this parable proves this point. His life did consist in his possessions. He worked hard to find security in this life. He farmed well and found he was now comfortable. He could take it easy and relax.

He was a fool for he did not consider eternity. He worked hard on this earth for this life and his earthly comfort. This life is short. How long did this rich man think he would live, eighty years, ninety, maybe

a hundred? Regardless, that is nothing compared to eternity. He had given no thought, no effort, to that eternal timeless time.

The parable ends with the man's soul being demanded of him. And what could he give to stop this? Not all the riches in his barns would help. When God demands a soul it is given. This man was a fool.

Jesus tells this parable so that His hearers would not be like this man. Don't be the fool in this parable! Work hard here on earth and be rich, there is nothing wrong with that. Abraham was wealthy so were David and Joseph. But consider eternity. Prepare for that.

But how does one prepare for eternity? Consider your sins and their payment. How would you pay? You can't, just like the rich man unable to pay with all in his barns. God must pay for you. Jesus makes that payment on the tree as He dies for you. He does all for you.

Be wise! Come to Jesus and ask for forgiveness. Come to Jesus and let Him wash your sins away. Let Him speak His Word to you and forgive you. Let Him give you His body and blood in the Supper. Be wise and receive Jesus.

Prayer: Father, in all wisdom let me seek Your Son. Jesus has died for me and forgives me all my sin. Bring Jesus to me again and again that I would live eternally in Him. In His Name. Amen.

Wednesday, February 25

Servants must Remain Watchful (Luke 12.35-40)

Be ready! A simple command from Jesus but one we should heed. The parable here is that a robber is coming. If the owner of the home knew what hour he was coming the owner would have been ready. But no thief announces their time of arrival. They show up and break in.

How much more should sinners be prepared for the advent of God! A thief can only steal things. Stopping the thief can save damage and loss to prosperity. But what happens when God comes? Should not everyone be ready for the coming of God?

They were not. While Jesus tells this parable about being ready the disciples were not ready. The religious establishment was not ready either. Who was ready for God to come? Not many, indeed!

The magi were ready. They came seeking the king. Anna and Simeon were ready. They longed for the coming of the Christ and patiently awaited Him. Sinners were ready. They had been living in sin and longed for the Christ to bring them the tender mercy and forgiveness of God. The blind, lame, tax collectors, prostitutes all flocked to Jesus. They were ready.

"The Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." Who expected the Son of Man when He came in great glory and might? Who expected that bloody scene? The coming of the Son of Man is

when Jesus was lifted on the cross. He came and conquered sin and who was ready?

But He will come again at an hour when you may not expect. Nothing prevents Him from coming back; Jesus is God and does as He wills. He can come back anytime. So heed the parable, be ready. Be about the master's business so that when Christ comes back He will find you serving. Stay dressed for action, live in your Baptismal grace receiving the Word and Supper continually. Be therefore alive in Christ and ready.

Prayer: Father in heaven, few were ready for Jesus' first coming. Yet, He died on the tree for sinners, of which I am one. Grant me to be in Jesus that I would be prepared for His second coming. In His Name. Amen.

Thursday, February 26

Wise and Foolish Servants (Luke 12.42-48)

Who is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master will find doing the proper things? Who could this be? Should it be you? Are you the one Jesus speaks about in this parable? Are you the faithful and wise manager? This is the way we often find parables, with ourselves at the center. Our sinful flesh would want to be at the heart of every parable as if Jesus speaks them all about us. But Jesus does not put you at the center of any of His parables.

Rather, He is the center. Jesus is the faithful servant. He is faithful every second of His earthly ministry. The Father's booming voice declares of Jesus, "This is my beloved Son, listen to Him." With every miracle and parable Jesus is faithful. He is faithful over a little and is given much.

Jesus is given not just the approval of the Father, but He is given the sins of all sinners. He is baptized under that load as He takes up your sins in the Jordan River. Jesus, the faithful servant, dies on the cross for you. He is faithful even to death. He loves you to the end.

He gives you more and more. He gives you Himself on the tree. He gives you this in your Baptism into Him. He gives you His Word that, as a disciple, you may learn of Him. He gives you Himself in the Supper that your sins would be forgiven. He gives you all this.

So what is your part? To be faithful. You are not some hired hand, but the master's own child. Willingly work in His kingdom for He has given all things to you. How can you not do the work of your master? Of course, you will and want to because you know all that He has done for you.

Prayer: Father, Jesus was a perfectly faithful servant who gave Himself for me on the tree. Grant me to be faithful to You in all that I do and say. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Friday, February 27

Unfruitful Fig Tree (Luke 13.6-9)

This isn't the third year of the fig tree. During the first three years no fruit would be harvested from the tree. On the fourth year any fruit was dedicated to God. The farmer had waited those years and three more. The tree had been barren for seven years! This was far past the reasonable time for the tree to bear fruit so the master wants the fruitless tree cut down.

This parable hinges on the vinedresser. He is an optimist to believe that there was a possibility for this tree to still bear fruit. Let it alone this year also... forgive it. But there should be no room for such compassion on a tree! Who would think this way?

The vinedresser knows that the tree needs something outside itself to produce fruit. Let me dig around it and put on manure. Can you imagine the care this vinedresser would take with this fig tree so that it would have every chance to bear fruit?

So also God looks for His people to bear fruit, but finds none. He has given the prophets, priests, and kings to speak His Word to them and they will not listen, they will not bear fruit. He has sent His Son to them to speak, for the Son is the Word. Will they listen? The Father will give them every chance.

Jesus is here that you would bear fruit. He does all for you. Faith and forgiveness do not come from you, but He gives. He digs around and places these gifts on you. He gives you growth each time you hear the Word, each time you receive the Supper. He grants you people in your life that you would love them and bear fruit. So live in the one who has died on the tree for you. Be the fruit of the cross that others would see and be pointed to their Savior.

Prayer: Father in heaven, Your Son gave Himself on the tree for me. Grant me not to be dead in sin, but alive to You in Jesus. Let me hear Your Word and receive Jesus. Grant me to bear fruit. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Saturday, February 28

Sower and Soil (Matthew 13.3-8, Mark 4.3-8, 14-20, Luke 8.5-8, 11-15)

Who then is the good soil? Are you good soil in yourself? This parable presents a trap for interpreting it. The trap is to assume that you are good soil. When you hear the Word you immediately bring forth a good crop, hundred, sixty, or thirty-fold because you are so good.

You are not good soil. You are by nature sinful and unclean. You would be that path that the seed just bounces off. God's Word could come to you daily and on your own you would only reject it. Is that

fair? Does that sound like this parable? This parable is about the power of the Word of God. Because you are sinful you would only resist that Word. This parable is about what Jesus does for you; He does everything for you.

When the Word comes to you it is Jesus who creates faith in your heart that you would not not reject His Word. Jesus does it all. We have no part in our salvation. You are the good soil only because Jesus makes you so. He transforms the granite slab of your heart into good soil. He does this not because you deserve it or have earned it, but only because He loves you.

He rescues you from the depths of your sin. How can you not bear good fruit after all that Jesus has done for you? But what sort of good fruit? This parable speaks to that. See how many have come to faith for a time, but then drifted away because of the cares of the world? See how many refused the Word in the first place? See how many fell away from Jesus because of trouble? Here is your chance to speak the Word to them, to encourage them, to show them by your life all that Jesus has done for you.

This you do daily. But what if no one listens to you? What if no one seems to notice your example? Do not be discouraged, but continue to speak and live Jesus to them. It is not up to you to bring faith into the hearts of others, Jesus does that. Let Him use you to witness that others would be transformed into that good soil.

Prayer: Father in heaven, You send Jesus to rescue me from my sin. He has opened my ears and heart to hear and receive the Word and made me good soil. Grant me to speak and live Your Word that others would see and hear. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Sunday, March 1

Weeds among Good Plants (Matthew 13.24-30, 36-43)

The field is sown, but weeded by an enemy. Seems like the master has no control! What was he thinking allowing someone to do this? But at the parable's center is the master who is in complete control. He knows exactly what happened. While the hired hands are baffled, the master knows. An enemy was permitted to do this in the field.

This parable shows that Jesus is in complete control. He knows the plans and purposes of the devil and his evil angels and He permits some of them. He allows evil to happen to Job, that Job's faith would be strengthened as Job relies more on the Lord. Jesus allows suffering to come into the lives of His saints that they would trust Him more and more. What the devil uses for evil, Jesus uses to bring us closer to Him.

The master is patient. Wait until the harvest. There is still time. There is time for the wheat to grow and flourish. There is time for the weeds

to infect the wheat and choke it out. But the master does not want to uproot the good with the bad. The time will come and the master will give the word to harvest the crop.

The end will come. Christ will come to judge the living and the dead. At that time the wheat, the believers, will be gathered to eternal life. The weeds, those unbelievers, will be gathered into hell. Time will run out and the end will come.

Endure the trials of this life. Continue in faith. Let nothing rob Jesus from you. Your master is in complete control. He knows what you are going through. He supports you with Word and Supper. Soon enough, He will bring you home at the harvest.

Prayer: Father in heaven, You are in complete control. You sent Jesus to save me and He has. You will send Jesus to end this world and the harvest will come. Grant me to live in Jesus and so be ready. In His Name. Amen

Monday, March 2

Growing Seed (Mark 4.26-29)

You know the way it is. Farmers farm. They till the soil and plant the seed. Fertilizer can be applied and bugs kept at away, but the farmer can't make the crop grow. If there is no rain, there's no rain. A farmer can work from sun up to sun down and if the crop fails, there's not much he or she can do. So it is with the kingdom of God.

There is not much you can do to create growth in someone else. You can talk to them about Jesus and invite them to worship, but you can't make another believe. You can live your life so that your neighbor sees your witness, but you can't force them to know your Savior. It is God who must bring faith and grow that faith.

How is this done? Through Word and Sacrament. Through our connection to Jesus in the Divine Service growth is given to our faith. It can be surprising to see the faith that someone else has. Perhaps they are going through a tragedy and you see or hear their faith. How did their faith get so strong? How are they able to trust in Jesus at such a time? He gives the growth.

But who is this farmer throwing out the seed? Jesus. During His earthly ministry wherever He goes He speaks sermons and parables. He speaks to anyone and everyone. Today still that Word goes out. He still speaks law and Gospel that sinners would hear and be given faith. The kingdom of God grows by His grace.

Prayer: Father in heaven, I thank You that Jesus showers me with His Word. Grant me faith and trust in Him to grow as I am the Word daily. Prepare me for times of testing and difficult. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Tuesday, March 3

Mustard Seed (Matthew 13.31-32, Mark 30-32, Luke 13.18-19)

It sure doesn't look like much, does it? A baby being Baptized. People sitting listening to a sermon. A friend telling another about Jesus. It doesn't look like much to the world when the kingdom of God comes and begins in us.

But that makes sense, doesn't it? The kingdom of God didn't look like much as it began in the Old Testament. Just Abraham being called from worshiping false gods to follow the true God to go somewhere. The kingdom continued to come to others like Isaac, Jacob, Joseph. It sure didn't look like much.

It didn't look like much as the Christ hung on the tree. There the kingdom began. Amid the ridicule of the passerby's and even those hanging with Him, the Christ didn't look like much. He was covered with blood and nearly dead. Who would believe that this was the beginning of the kingdom? The death of the King begins the kingdom! The kingdom of God never looks like much. But it begins and produces much fruit in the lives of sinners. Jesus turns the hearts of sinners to hear the law and Gospel; to repent of sin and trust in Him for salvation. The world never thinks this is much at all. But you know the truth, this is everything.

The coming of the kingdom is Jesus. He brings the fullness of the kingdom. He seems small and insignificant to the world. But His importance for you grows as you learn to trust in Him. Like a mustard seed planted and growing. It becomes large, like your faith. It might have been small but the more you suffer and rely on Him, the more you are in His Word and prayer, the more your faith grows. The more the kingdom grows in you. Thanks be to God that your faith grows, the kingdom grows, that others would come and see.

Prayer: Father, the kingdom seems small to the world, grant me to trust in the one who died in my place. Forgive my sins, grow my faith, bring your kingdom to me that others would see and believe too. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Wednesday, March 4

Yeast (Matthew 13.33, Luke 13.20-21)

The bread is not complete until it rises. There must be time for it to rise. When the bread is all leavened it can be baked. The hiddenness of the process is highlighted by Jesus. The woman hides the leaven in the flour while it rises. She has no part in the rising of the bread.

The kingdom of God seems hidden also. We have no work in our redemption. God does all the work. He prepares all the events in the world until the time was just right. He sent forth His Son, concealed, hidden, in human flesh. Who would recognize Jesus as God? Hidden

in flesh the Christ came and at the right time and gave Himself on the tree for sinners. Jesus says that He is the bread of the world. He gives life to the world that those who feed on Him shall never be hungry again.

The work of the kingdom in this world often seems hidden also. Who sees what Jesus continues to do in this world? Who recognizes the out pouring of the Gospel and the grace of God? To the world all this is hidden. But there will come a time when it will be revealed.

On the Last Day Jesus will come back and time will end. It will be revealed that He is God in flesh. It will be evident that those in Him will receive eternal life and those not in Him will receive condemnation.

So what now? Be ready! The judge will come back; repent of sin. Strengthen your relationship with the Lord now. Let nothing remove you from the love of God found in Christ Jesus. The kingdom of God, Jesus, is working now. Recognize Him and flock to where He is found for you.

Prayer: Father in heaven, hidden in flesh You send me the Christ. Hidden in this world Your kingdom comes to me through Word and Sacrament. Ready me for the second coming of the Christ. In His Name. Amen.

Thursday, March 5

Hidden Treasure (Matthew 13.44)

These parables in Matthew 13.44-46 are tough. They are short, which may lend to our difficulty interpreting them. There are two ways to interpret these parables. One of the law, one of the Gospel.

The law interpretation goes like this: You find the kingdom of God and realize how valuable it is. You willingly, joyfully, give up all to get this great treasure. Would you not give all you have? Of course! So great is this treasure! You sell all you have and get the kingdom of God!

The problem with this interpretation is that it puts you at the center of the parable. You cannot by your own reason or strength believe in Jesus or come to Him. He must draw you. What could you hope to give for the kingdom? In pride and vanity man thinks he has something God would want. God needs nothing from you and anything you could do, well, God could do far better. You could search your whole life and you would never find this treasure.

The Gospel interpretation goes like this: You are the treasure. You are laying there in a field like a lump of metal. You can't do anything to be found. You must be found by another. God seeks you out. He finds you. He buys you back. How? He offers His only Son to die on the tree. He pays the full price for your sins giving all He has. You have been bought with a price.

In the Gospel interpretation we see that God is the center of the parable. Even more, the sacrifice that Jesus has made is the very heart of it all. You are passive, you receive the gift of salvation done and won by Jesus. The focus is not on you and what you must do, but on what God has done for you through Jesus Christ.

The Gospel interpretation is correct. This parable is all about what Jesus has done for you. He laid down His life for you because He values you so much more than some lump of metal. You are His own dear child!

Prayer: Father in heaven, You show Your love for me in giving Jesus to die for all my sins. Grant me joy knowing the depths of Your love that I would tell others of what Jesus has done. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Friday, March 6

Valuable Pearl (Matthew 13.45-46)

Have you learned from the last parable? Do you see where you are and where God is in this parable? Would you still want to put yourself as the main actor in the parable or will you let God be God?

Here God is the merchant. He is the one searching. He is the one doing. What can the pearl do? Nothing. Under the law we are condemned and unable to accomplish anything for God. God must be the one to come and seek us out. He must come and save us.

The merchant sells all he has to buy the pearl. Foolish merchant? God gives everything to purchase you from the devil's kingdom. Foolish God? God knows exactly what He is doing. You are more valuable than some pearl. You are His unique child. He loves you beyond measure! God gives everything for you.

Isn't this what Jesus is talking about? He continues to talk about how much He loves you. He shows this with every miracle He performs. He shows this as He travels on to Jerusalem to die for you. He is the merchant seeking to buy you back from sin, devil, and death.

These parables, viewed rightly, show how much God loves you. He willingly gives up all for you. He does all the work of your salvation. So what then is your response? Would you not love your neighbor as yourself that others would see how valued they are by your God? Would you not speak and live like you have been bought with a price? Would you not influence the lives of others that they would see their value and how much they are loved by God?

Prayer: Father in heaven, Your Son has rescued me from sin, devil, and death. I thank You that Jesus sought me and paid the full price for my salvation. Grant me to live as Your redeemed child. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Saturday, March 7

Fishing Net (Matthew 13.47-50)

Jesus continues with the short parables in Matthew's Gospel. This time about fish being caught in a net. All sorts of fish are caught, almost like the fisherman doesn't care what kind of fish he is seeking. They are sorted and the bad thrown out.

Jesus is that fisherman. He casts the net very wide to catch all manner of people. He wants all people to come to a knowledge of Him and be saved in this net. This parable might sound a lot like the parable of the sower. The sower goes out and throws the seed anywhere and everywhere. So this fisherman gathers fish from everywhere.

You are the fish. The fisherman seeks you out. He finds you and pulls you in with the good news of the Gospel. He shows you how much He loves you. From the chaos of sin and death you are saved! When the time is right, He will come back. All flesh will rise from the dust of the earth and be judged. Some to everlasting life and others to everlasting death.

How will He know who goes where? He is God. He knows those who follow Him and those who refuse His gift of life. There will be no more time to repent and turn back. The end will have come. For you in Jesus, it will be a great and joyful day. The marriage feast of the Lamb! But for those not in Christ it will be a day of terror.

This parable shows how much you are loved. You are sought out like a treasure in a field, a fine pearl, or fish by a fisherman. God seeks you because He created you and loves you. He pulls you close to Him through the death that Jesus died that you would be His eternally. He wants you to live.

Prayer: Father, You sent Your Son to seek me out amid my sin. Jesus has died for me and pulls me into the church through Baptism, Word, Supper. Grant me to live in Jesus that I would be Yours eternally. In His Name. Amen.

Sunday, March 8

Owner of a House (Matthew 13.52)

Jesus asks His disciples if they have understood all these parables. Some were difficult! Could they interpret them all? Their quick answer, yes! So Jesus tells them one more parable.

Every scribe trained in the kingdom of God is like a master who brings out of his treasure new and old. Does that fit the disciples? Shall they bring out treasure both new and old? Does that fit you? Do you understand these parables? Shall you bring out this treasure?

Everyone who understand the parables of Jesus is well trained in the kingdom of God; they are well trained in Jesus. The parables speak of who Jesus is and what He has come to do. He has come to seek and

save the lost. This is not something new, but old. It is as old as Adam and Eve's sin in the garden, when a Savior was promised. The old that the master brings out is the treasure of the Old Testament. Knowing Jesus means knowing what He did there and then. How He came so often to save His people. How He foreshadowed what He would ultimately do for all sinners.

Knowing the kingdom of God means bringing out the new treasure also. It is new that God would come in flesh to save sinners. Jesus came in flesh- true God and true man. He journeyed on teaching and working miracles, proving who He was. He was hung on a tree and died for you. Here is the new treasure. Bring it out!

Bring out the Word which speaks of this great treasure. Drown your sins in your Baptism into Christ. Be washed clean in Him who loves you. Come to the Supper and receive Him as often as possible. Here is the new treasure given for you that you would be rich in Christ.

Are you this master bringing out treasure, new and old? Do you live in the Word of God and in His Sacraments? Do you bring these out for others? What better treasure is there than Jesus Christ and Him crucified for sinners? So speak, live, and work in Jesus and be such a wise scribe, trained so well in the kingdom of God.

Prayer: Father, grant me to be wise in the kingdom of God. Let me bring out the old and new treasures You so generously give to Your people. Let me live in all that Jesus has done for me that others would see and believe also. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Monday, March 9

Lost Sheep (Matthew 18.12-14)

Here is a simple little parable. A shepherd has a hundred sheep and loses one. He leaves the ninety-nine and looks for the one. Finding that one sheep he rejoices.

Highlighted is the compassion the shepherd has for each sheep. He can't stand that one goes missing. He must find it. He wants all his sheep in the sheep fold where they are safe. Can you imagine the joy of the shepherd who loves each sheep, even knows them by name, finally finding the one that was lost?

How much more does God love you! You are not a sheep and God is not a shepherd. Jesus uses this image to point you to something deeper. How much more does God love you! Consider it well. You were lost in your sins and trespasses, but God would not leave you there. He would come after you. At just the right time Jesus came and took on flesh. The Good Shepherd laid down His life for the sheep. Jesus died for you that you would be found. How much does God love you!

But God comes after you. In your life God seeks you out with His Word. He speaks to you. He wants a relationship with you. He forgives you by washing your sins away through Baptism and joining you to the death of Jesus. He desires to feed you with His Supper. Consider the joy that God has when you receive His gifts! How much He loves you!

You are found in Christ! But there are others who are still lost. Still God seeks them. But He uses you to seek your fellow sheep. You know the joy of being found, you know the blessing of God in your life, you know the love of God. You have been given the Word to speak to others. You have been given a life to live as an example to others. Lead them to the sheep pen; to Christ.

Prayer: Father in heaven, You sent Your Son, in love, to seek and save the lost. Thank You for bringing me to Christ. Keep me close to Him through Word and Sacrament. Grant that others hear my words and see my life and come to Jesus also. In His Name. Amen.

Tuesday, March 10

The Sheep, Gate, Shepherd (John 10.1-5, 7-18)

Wonderfully Jesus uses this image of shepherd and sheep to describe His church. It is an easy parable and one that brings great comfort. The shepherd goes in the proper way, anyone else climbing another way is not the shepherd, but a robber. The shepherd calls out the sheep, they follow, and He leads them. Sounds a lot like Psalm 23.

But Jesus continues saying, "I am the door of the sheep." In the first century, in Judea, shepherds would build stone structures for their sheep. Usually, these were circular and had an opening. The shepherd would stand in the opening and literally be the door. The sheep would pass between his legs as they entered their pen for the night. The shepherd would lay down in the door to keep the sheep in the pen that they would be safe all night.

Jesus is the door. His sheep must go through Him. They must be washed in His death and drown their sins. They must die with the Shepherd. Jesus is the way, truth, and life- there is no other. To have eternal life one must go through Jesus.

He is the Good Shepherd. Shepherds laid down in the door of the pen, but they did not have a habit of laying their life down for sheep. Jesus does. He offers all for His sheep. Going through the sacrifice He has made His sheep have eternal life.

So enter the door of the sheep! Go through Jesus. Be washed in Baptism. Be fed in the Supper. Hear and follow His voice. Know that you are just a sheep. Defenseless against the devil. Receive from Jesus not just forgiveness but safety from the evil one.

Prayer: Father, You send me a good shepherd to lay His life down for me. Grant me to go through Jesus and receive eternal life. In His Name. Amen.

Wednesday, March 11

Master and His Servant (Luke 17.7-10)

You know the way it is with masters and servants. The master is the one who reclines at table and the servant serves. Even after the servant has had a long day, still he must serve. And even after the servant has served the master all the long day, he is still an unworthy servant only doing his duty.

So it is with the law. You are a servant to the law. You must serve the law of God all day and night without ceasing. There is no end to the demands of the law. Serve perfectly one day, then the next, and the next and you have only done your duty. It is the duty of everyone created by God to follow the law perfectly. This is done not to get something extra, but as our duty.

Have you followed the law perfectly? Have you honored the law of God each moment of your life? Fearing, loving, and trusting God above all? Honoring His Name and His day? Completely, selflessly, loving your neighbor as your self? The truth is that you are sinful and cannot follow the law of God perfectly. We sin in word, deed, and thought. We are unworthy servants for we have not kept the law of God.

But there is one who served perfectly. He was the very nature of God and yet did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped. He humbled Himself and took the form of a servant. He served the will of the Father perfectly. He kept the law. He traveled on to the tree and gave His life as a ransom for many. This Jesus served perfectly. He is the one who could comment, even after the cross, I am an unworthy servant, only doing my duty.

Through His worth you are made worthy. He took your sins from you on the tree and paid the full price. He forgives you. He has redeemed you to serve. Let the law be transformed! You get to serve your God! You get to love Him and follow His Word! You get to love your neighbor and support him or her! You get to! You know that you can never repay what Jesus has done for you, but still you get to serve. Prayer: Father in heaven, You sent Your Son to serve me perfectly. Forgive me and set me free from condemnation to sin that I would joyfully serve others. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Thursday, March 12

Unmerciful Servant (Matthew 18.23-34)

What a bookkeeper this king is! He keeps track of all the accounts of his servants. And what an unbelievable debt this servant has. Ten thousand talents- this would be like trillions of dollars today. How could any servant ever rack up a debt like this? No doubt, those who heard this parable assumed that the king would put the servant in jail for failure to pay!

But the king has mercy! No king should do this! There was no way that this servant could repay the huge debt that he acquired. He should just be put in jail. But the master forgives him and cancels the debt. The man is free! He no longer owes this huge debt. His family is saved.

Out of love one might assume that the servant would treat others as he was treated. But he goes and find another who owes him a small debt, only one hundred denarii, and demands payment. When the other is unable to pay the servant has him thrown in jail. The master was angry with the wicked servant whose debt was cancelled and did not forgive the debt of the other.

But what does this mean? The debt you owe God is one that you could never hope to repay. You should be cast off forever into hell to pay eternally for your sins. But in unbelievable mercy God forgives your huge debt through the death of Jesus.

This should be the way we treat others too. When another sins against us we should forgive their small debt because our huge debt has already been forgiven. How many times should we forgive our brother? Every time because we have been forgiven continually. Each time you sin God forgives you, so you, in love, should forgive your brother.

Prayer: Father in heaven, You grant Jesus to die in my place and I am forgiven my huge debt of sin against you. Give me faith and trust in You that I would forgive those who sin against me and so show forth Your love in this dark world. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Friday, March 13

Good Samaritan (Luke 10.30-37)

A man laying dead or nearly dead in the road. What should those passing by do? For the priest the answer was simple. He was constrained by the law not to help. He could not risk becoming ritually unclean. If he would become unclean he would have to go all the way back to Jerusalem to be cleansed. He could not help at all.

The Levite must have seen what the priest had done. The Levite was just a temple helper and he too did not want to be unclean. He followed the example of the priest and passed the man on the other side of the road.

Who would want to get down in the blood and muck and mire of this man? No one following the law could or would! The law

constrained their actions and forced them not to help. But the Samaritan... he was not constrained by the ceremonial laws of the Jews. Nothing forbade him from helping. He stoops down to aid the man who had been attacked by robbers. Carrying the man on his animal to an inn he willingly pays for his treatment, even promising more if the man should need it. The Samaritan proved himself to be a neighbor.

So who is the Samaritan in the parable? Is it you? Is your job to help others? To have mercy on them? No. Your job is to lay there nearly dead. You are beat up by your sins and the accusations of the law. You are the one who needs saving. Could you take yourself to the safety of the inn? Could you pay after being robbed? Jesus is the one who is not constrained to help. He swoops in where the law can't. He has mercy amid the accusations of the law. He forgives. He brings you to the church. He pays the price for your care.

Jesus sets you free from the law, that you too would serve. You are not the priest or Levite, you are a Christian. If the Son sets you free, you are free indeed! Free to serve your neighbor in need. Who is that neighbor? Anyone in need. Live in Christ and be ready to serve.

Prayer: Father in heaven, Your Son served me when the law could not. Jesus forgave my sins and granted me eternal life. Give me the zeal to help my neighbor in whatever his need may be. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Saturday, March 14

Friend in Need (Luke 11.5-8)

Who wouldn't help a friend in need? What about a friend who needs help at midnight? What about a friend who only needs some food at midnight? Couldn't the guest wait until morning to eat? Would a few hours really hurt them?

But the asker keeps asking, keeps knocking and begging. This sort of friend won't go away without food. What choice is there but to give in and give him whatever food you've got.

The persistence and imprudence of the friend is what caused action. It was clear that the man asking for food was not going to give up without getting the food. How much more when we ask God, would He listen, answer, and give? God is never bothered by our requests. He never rolls His eyes at our prayers. He wants to hear. How much more than a pestered friend will God answer!

This parable shows us what God is not like. He not like a put off friend. He wants to help. He wants to hear from you. He wants to answer. He wants to! So ask Him! So pray to Him! And as you do know that God wants to hear you and answer you.

You know how much God loves you. Has not the Father sent His Son to this earth? Has not Jesus come to seek and save sinners? Did He not give Himself on the tree for you? Has Jesus not come to you through Baptism and Word to forgive you? Does He not come to you in the Supper to strengthen you? You know how much God loves you and how much He wants to hear and answer you. So pray.

Prayer: Father in heaven, I know that You are full of compassion for me. I know that you want to hear my prayer and answer. I give You thanks for Your great compassion and love through Jesus. Strengthen me in Jesus. In His Name. Amen.

Sunday, March 15

Lowest Seat at the Feast (Luke 14.7-14)

Sounds like good practical advice. When you go to a feast don't take the place of honor right away. Take a lower place and wait for the host to move you up. Better to be moved up than moved down! But is this all there is? Is Jesus just a teacher of simple, practical, advice?

Jesus is really not giving you practical advice. Does it matter to Jesus if you are moved up or down in the seating chart at the next wedding you attend? Jesus is doing something deeper, something more, here.

Jesus is showing you who He is. He is God. He should take the supreme seat. He should be first. He should be awed and respected and worshiped by all. But He takes on flesh. He humbles Himself and makes Himself nothing, taking the very form of a servant. He doesn't even take a seat at the table, but waits on the table. He serves.

In this humble position Jesus travels on to the tree shouldering our burden of sin. He serves you by dying in your place under the wrath of the Father. He is humbled and crushed under that weight that you would be exalted.

You are exalted. In pride you seek the best seat, the seat of God. With every sin you tear down God's position. You should be cast away from God forever. But He forgives. He elevates you to the highest position. He makes You His own dear child through Jesus. Friend, move up higher, closer to Jesus! Come closer to Him in worship. Strengthen your bond with Him in the Word and Supper. Prayer back to Him. Friend, move up higher and closer.

Prayer: Father in heaven, I give You thanks for all that Your Son has done for me. He has elevated me to the highest place. Grant me to come ever closer to Jesus through Word and Sacrament. In His Name. Amen.

Monday, March 16

Invitation to a Banquet (Luke 14.16-24)

There is still room. Isn't that amazing? The meal is ready, entertainment set to go, the banquet hall is decorated and there is more room! You can empathize with the man throwing the banquet, can't you? He wants the room to be filled with guests. He wants everyone to have a great time. This is what he has been planning and preparing for for such a long time.

But it seems that no one wants to come. Excuses are given and they are pathetic. One person bought a field and has to check it out. What farmer would buy a field unseen? What a flimsy excuse not to come to the banquet. Another bought five yoke of oxen and needs to examine them. Again, what farmer would buy five yoke of oxen unseen? None. Another just got married and can't come. Couldn't he bring his wife to the banquet?

Invite more. Invite more! Bring in more people! If some give lame excuses invite others. The banquet needs to be full. And the servants invite everyone they can think of. They are to compel people to come in.

The man throwing the banquet is God; Jesus. Doesn't God want everyone to come? Of course! Invite everyone! But people give lame excuses why they can't come. My kids have sports! Have to take a vacation! I am too tired from work, its my only day to sleep in! It's just not what I am into! People ignore the banquet week after week.

What then is this banquet that God has provided and invites you to attend? It's the Divine Service. God sets the table with the best food. He gives you His Word of forgiveness that you would be dressed in the robe of Christ's righteousness. He feeds you with the very body and blood of Jesus. All this God prepares that you would come.

So come! Come to the banquet of God. Consider the joy He has when you come week after week to receive His gifts! But this isn't just for you, you know that. This weekly banquet is for everyone. Invite those around you, compel them to come with you. Could there be anything better than beating together in the presence of this loving master?

Prayer: Father in heaven, You prepare a banquet for me that I would receive Your gift of forgiveness and live eternally with You. Grant me joy in receiving Jesus that I would invite others to join me. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Tuesday, March 17

Cost of Discipleship (Luke 14.28-33)

Count the cost. A man building must consider how much the labor, materials, and permits will cost. If not, he may run out of money with the building only half done.

Count the cost. A king must consider how many men he has in the army as he goes out to war. Will he have enough to defeat the enemy? If not he might be defeated in battle and his kingdom may fall.

Count the cost. It does no good to get halfway through and lose the war or not have enough money to finish the building. Consider how much it will take before you begin. Here Jesus speaks of discipleship. Know what it will take to live your life as a Christian. Are you prepared to lose friends or family members over your faith? Are you prepared to be fired from your job? Are you ready to be ridiculed for what you believe? Count the cost.

Is it worth it to be live like a Christian? Is it worth it to lose friends or family or be made fun of? Is it? You know what being a Christian is all about. Jesus counted the cost for you. He knew exactly what it would take to win you back from sin, devil, and death. He was willing to pay that price, even if it was very steep. He took on flesh and humbled Himself. He was ridiculed by so many. Many walked away in disbelief. Even His own family tried to stop Him. People hated Him, even wanting Him dead. He was rejected and betrayed. Hung on a tree, He died the death of a criminal. He knew all this was coming, the cost had been counted.

Each of your sins had been counted and placed on Jesus. He knew the cost. He paid for your sins with His life. The Father poured out all His hatred and wrath over your sins on His Son. This was the cost and Jesus willingly paid it for you.

Count the cost. How much does it cost to follow Jesus? How much did it cost for Him to redeem you from your sins? How can you not follow? Do you see how much He loves you? What is some ridicule? What is the loss of a job? What is even the loss of your life compared to following Jesus? Renounce it all and follow the one who died for you.

Prayer: Father, as You sent Jesus to this earth You knew the cost He would pay for my sins. Grant me to know the cost of being Your disciple, that I would follow gladly no matter what. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Wednesday, March 18

Lost Sheep (Luke 15.4-7)

This parable begins the three that Jesus tells, here in Luke 15. They are all parables of the lost and the importance of what is lost ramps up

as the parables go on. Here one sheep is lost, one out of a hundred. The next parable has one coin lost, one out of ten. And the last parable has one son lost, one of two. First that lost sheep.

Jesus tells these parables in response to the Pharisees and scribes grumbling that Jesus eats and drinks with sinners. In each of the parables the theme of lost is important. But when that lost thing is found there is great joy. For Luke, in his Gospel, being lost means being dead and being found means being alive.

The sheep was lost and as good as dead. If the shepherd couldn't find it and bring it back it wouldn't come back. There would be no hope. Thus, the shepherd must go and find the sheep. He brings it back rejoicing!

You know what this parable means. And you know who is at the center of this parable. It is Jesus- He is the shepherd looking for the lost sheep. He leaves all and searches. This is what Jesus was doing when He told the parable; He was eating with the lost, those tax collectors and sinners. Jesus was rejoicing that they were being brought into the kingdom!

But the Pharisees and scribes did not rejoice that sinners were entering the kingdom. They were grumbling and offended at what Jesus was doing. They were too righteous for the works and words of Jesus! They didn't need Him! The shepherd invited them to rejoice with Him and they would not.

What about you? Will you rejoice with the shepherd? Every time someone is Baptized, they are found. Every time sinners confess their sins, they are found. Each time someone comes back to the Divine Service after an absence, they are found. Will you rejoice with the Shepherd who has found them? The invitation goes out, come and rejoice with those who have been found by their Good Shepherd.

Prayer: Father in heaven, Jesus has found me amid my sins and brought me home rejoicing. Grant me joy as others come into the sheep fold. Give me times to witness to other of the hope I have that they would see and believe. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Thursday, March 19

Lost Coin (Luke 15.8-10)

This parable is much like the one before; the shepherd who had a hundred sheep and loses one. Now we have a woman who has ten coins and loses one of them. Jesus is ramping up the importance of the thing lost. The shepherd lost only one percent of his sheep, while this woman loses ten percent of her wealth. There is still a search and still joy at finding.

In this parable Jesus is the woman searching. He comes to seek and save the lost. You, you are the coin. You have no ability to get up and

come back to Jesus. You can't go and find Him, He must find you. This is why the Father sent His Son- that Jesus would find sinners.

God comes to seek and save the lost. In flesh this is exactly what Jesus does. He still comes to seek and save you. Through Word and Sacrament you are sought out amid your sin. Jesus will not leave you alone, but He keeps coming to you- seeking you.

These two parables, the lost sheep and lost coin, are simple parables. And if Jesus stopped here I think the hearers would be content. The message is simple, Jesus comes to find sinners. But Jesus does not end these parables here. There is one more parable in this trilogy; the parable of the forgiving father. The first two parables first set up the third. There is a tension with those who are complacent in sin; those who don't want to be found and enter the joy of the finding. What about them? Will Jesus still seek them too?

Jesus seeks all. He wants none to be left without Him. He knows the importance of this mission. He desires to rescue each person from eternal torment in hell. He wants, more than anything, to bring each to eternal life. This is why He dies on the tree, this is why He seeks and saves the lost.

Prayer: Father, Your Son has sought me while I was lost. He found me with His Word and Sacrament. He bought me back into His kingdom with great joy. Grant me to live in Jesus as one who is found. In His Name. Amen.

Friday, March 20

Lost Son (Luke 15.11-32)

The parables of the lost sheep and lost coin have been leading up to this one. Here we have a lost son, more important than a lost sheep or lost coin. The parable starts with the younger son wanting his father dead and demanding his share of the estate. Amazingly, unbelievably, the father agrees. The son takes the wealth and leaves for a far away country.

This would shock and offend the hearers. What a horrid son this is! Further, he wastes all the money. Hitting rock bottom he is left with no choice but to feed pigs. This son is unclean, it just can't get any worse for him. He decides to go back to his father and beg for a job, anything is better than what he is doing!

But this parable is really not about the younger son. The father sees the boy a long way off and feels compassion for him. He runs out to meet boy and before the boy can apologize or say anything the father hugs him. A party is called for and there is much joy.

This fits with the previous parables. Something lost being found and there being joy at the finding. Here the joy might seem more believable

than a shepherd finding a sheep or woman finding a coin. If this parable ended here it would wrap up so nicely, but it doesn't.

There's the older boy. He was in the field and when he hears what has happened he is offended. That brother, that sinner, has come home! The older boy knows what a wretched sinner his brother must be, devouring all the wealth with prostitutes! No way can the older boy be part of that celebration! But the father entreaties him to join the party.

This parable is about the compassion of the father. He is wonderfully loving to both of his boys. He does not favor one over the other, but loves both. He wants both to be part of the family and love one another. The tension here is that the Pharisees were the older boy. They grumbled at Jesus eating with sinners. They refused to rejoice when a lost one was found. Will they enter the celebration? Will they repent and rejoice with the sinners? Will they see the compassion of their father? Will they love their brother?

The older boy was the lost boy. The Pharisees were lost thinking they did not need God. They assumed they were holy enough, or holier than those sinners. But God has compassion. He seeks them out. He wants them to enter the joy of being found. What of you? God seeks you too. See His compassion and enter the joy of being found.

Prayer: Father, Your compassion knows no end. You seek sinners continually. I thank You for finding me amid my sin and granting me forgiveness through Jesus. Use me to find others and bring them into the joy of being found. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Saturday, March 21

Shrewd Manager (Luke 16.1-8)

There is a moment in this parable that makes the story work. A manager was mismanaging his masters accounts and would soon be fired. It seems likely that everyone knew that this guy was dishonest. But there is a moment before the dishonest guy is fired when he is still managing the accounts.

He calls in various people who owe the master debts and reduces them. No one questions this. Perhaps it was the master's habit to do this? But the dishonest manager is commended by the master. Why?

The dishonest manager relies on the compassion and mercy of the master. A little like the prodigal son going back to his father, assuming that his father will somehow have mercy on him and take him back. The master is merciful in this parable and this is the point. You must rely on the mercy of God.

You are the dishonest manager in this parable. You have squandered what God has given you to manage. And should God demand an accurate accounting, what would you say? Has not God given you gifts

and talents? Have you used them to their fullest for His kingdom? Have you been totally faithful in all you have been given?

There is a moment before the judgment, before the reckoning. In this moment you need to rely on the mercy of your master. He is compassionate! As you confess your sins to Him, He promises to forgive them all. He commends you for trusting in His mercy. You know that He will have mercy.

This master always has mercy. He sends His Son to this earth to die for the sins of sinners. Here is underserved mercy! This mercy is given out freely to sinners through Word and Sacrament. In this moment rely on the mercy of God. He loves you and grants a sinner like you mercy.

Prayer: Father in heaven, You give me time to repent of my sins. I know that you are full of compassion and will have mercy on me through Jesus Christ. Forgive me and save me. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Sunday, March 22

Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31)

Everyone could see that Lazarus had nothing. He had no house, no family, no money. His clothes were tatters and he had no health. He lay there at the gate of the rich man hoping for the food that was to be swept off the floor and pitched out.

The rich man had everything. He had wealth and friends. His food was the finest and best. His clothes were soft and luxurious. He wanted for nothing. Everyone wanted to be around him and share in his excess.

Both the rich man and Lazarus die. No one cares about the rich man. No one attends his soul. Lazarus is care for by the angels who take him to paradise.

Even in death the rich man has not changed. He demands that the wretched beggar Lazarus cool him in his tournament. He demands that Lazarus go back and warn his brothers so they can avoid the torment of hell. Of course the brothers won't listen to Scripture! They need Lazarus to tell them. Would they even listen to the beggar?

The point of this parable is that they won't be convinced even if someone should rise of the dead. Who is "they"? The Pharisees and scribes. They had Moses and the Prophets (the entire Old Testament). They knew the Scriptures. They had seen the miracles that Jesus was doing. It was all right in front of them! But they were not convinced. Neither would they be convinced even if Jesus would rise from the dead.

Someone does rise from the dead- a man names Lazarus (not the guy from the parable). And when Lazarus walks out out of the tomb, the

chief priests and pharisees seek to kill Jesus. Either one is for Jesus or against Him. There is no middle ground. This parable warns- do not be like the rich man. See what God has done and is doing and believe!

Trust that Jesus is true God and true man. Believe that Jesus came to save sinners from their sins. Know that Jesus came to save you. He comes to you through your Baptism to wash your sins away through His death. He dies that you would live! Receive Him in Word and Supper. Strengthen your faith now that at your last hour the angels would escort you to eternal life.

Prayer: Father in heaven, Your Son rose from the dead as proof that my sins were forgiven on the tree. Grant me faith to believe and trust all that Jesus has done for me. In His Name. Amen.

Monday March 23

Workers in the Vineyard (Matthew 20.1-16)

It's not fair! Some worked more and some worked less, but all received the same pay. Each received what was fair for a day's work, but some hardly worked at all. It's not fair!

The way we think is that one should receive pay for what work one has done. This is fair. Working longer than another, one should be paid more. But this parable has each receiving the same payment, it doesn't seem fair.

It isn't fair. When sinners are called into the kingdom of God it is not fair. What have you done to earn or win your salvation? What have you done that God should pay you back? Nothing, not one thing. God gives salvation freely to those who don't deserve it. This is not fair.

It isn't fair. The Father sends his Son to die on a tree for sinners. How can this be fair? It isn't fair at all. Innocent Jesus dies for the worst offenders. He pays the price for your sins on the cross, the price that you should have paid eternally in hell.

It isn't fair. Jesus comes to you in your life. He washes your sins away through your Baptism into Him. He takes them from you and gives you His righteousness. He gives you His Word that you would know Him and His love for you. He feeds you with His body and blood that you would be and know that you are forgiven. How is this fair? What can you give back to God?

It isn't fair. When your last hour comes and your body stops, Jesus will take you to be with Him. He will bring you to paradise. Do you deserve this? Have you earned this? Nope. It's all a gift. Jesus does not operate by what is fair. He gives and forgives the unjust and the sinners. You receive the same as everyone else who has been forgiven. You receive eternal life in Christ. What more is there?

Prayer: Father in heaven, You are not fair for You send Your Son to die in the place of sinners. Forgive my sins and strengthen my faith

that I would always rely on Your mercy. Bring me to eternal life. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Tuesday, March 24

Persistent Widow (Luke 18.2-8)

There was no way this woman was going to get what she wanted. She had nothing to bargain with... nothing to bribe the judge with. Everyone knew he was unjust. He didn't care about justice or who was in the right. He decided the cases by who paid the most. But this widow had nothing, what could she do?

She pestered the judge day and night. You can imagine it, can't you? The judge leaves his house and there she is, begging and pleading, making a scene. Walking through the town, she follows him and everyone can hear her. When he is working he knows she is waiting for him outside the office. When he is home he knows she is waiting for him right outside. She is always there pestering and demanding justice.

What can the judge do? There will be no end to this until he gives into her. So he gives in and gives her justice. Is that the point of the parable? That God is some unjust judge that we have to pester Him? Does God not want to hear us pray? What is Jesus talking about?

This parable is a comparison of opposites. The character of the judge is opposite of God. If an unjust judge will listen to a widow crying out, how much more will a loving God listen to you. God is nothing like that judge. He wants to hear you. He invites you to speak to Him and promises that He will listen. You will never exasperate Him. He always wants to listen.

Therefore, we ought always pray. This is what Jesus is getting at in this parable. Pray! God wants to hear you. You don't need to pester God, you won't pester Him. He has given you His word that you would hear Him and He wants to hear back from you. He will listen and answer.

You know that your God is not an unjust judge. You see His love. The Father has sent His Son for you. The Son has come and died in your place on the tree. How much God loves you! You know it! So ask Him, pray to Him, as a dear child talks to their loving father.

Prayer: Father, You always listen to me gladly. I thank You that You have given me Your Word that I would hear You, hear me as I pray back to You for You are my gracious Father. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Wednesday, March 25

Pharisee and Tax Collector (Luke 18.10-14)

Where is your trust? For the Pharisee in this parable his trust was in himself and what he could do. He thought that he could keep the law of God perfectly. When he compared himself to other men he saw how much better he was. They sinned, but not he! Compared to the tax collector, who stole and cheated, he was holy. What more did the Pharisee need?

But this is not the way the law is meant to work. The law does not invite us to compare ourselves to others. Nor does the law say that if you are better than another you are holy. The law demands perfection of the individual. The law is not meant to show us how good we are, but how sinful we are. The mirror of the law reflects back to us our sins and shows us that we are sinful.

The Pharisee didn't know the mirror of the law. Instead, he compared himself to people he knew to be 'more' sinful than him. But the tax collector knows the mirror of the law. He doesn't compare himself to anyone. He knows that he has not done right in the eyes of God. What else can he say or do but ask for mercy, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!"

This is where law wants to drive us, right to our knees that we would despair of our sins. What can we do to make up for our sins? What could we offer to God for them? How could we pay for them? There is nothing we could do or give for our sins. The tax collector knew there was nothing he could do. He needed God to take his sins away.

The mirror of the law, used rightly, shows us our sins and our inability to pay for them. It forces us to turn to another for help. Jesus is ready to help. He has come to take the sins of sinners on Himself. For those who cry for mercy, Jesus forgives. He justifies the sinner, that is, He makes us right with God.

How can Jesus do this? By taking all our sins on Himself and paying the full price for them under the Father's wrath on the cross. He suffered our punishment for us! This is what Jesus wants to give us, forgiveness. The Pharisee didn't want it for he thought he didn't need forgiveness. The tax collector knew his sins and his need. So you, use the law rightly, know your sins and your need for a Savior. Ask for mercy and He will answer.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You sent Your Son to bring mercy to sinners. I know my sins and my need for Jesus. Forgive my sins, have mercy on me. Strengthen my faith that I would trust in Jesus. In His Name. Amen.

Thursday, March 26

King's Ten Servants given Minas (Luke 19.12-27)

In this long parable Jesus is the nobleman. The nobleman in the parable is obscenely generous. Giving minas to servants that they would invest them would seem crazy! Who would do that with their wealth? It would be unusual for a nobleman to give such wealth to a servant. Would any modern business man give twenty thousand dollars to those working in the mail room that they would invest it for him?

The nobleman (Jesus) goes away for a long journey. Here we find ourselves in this parable. Jesus has done away. He has ascended into heaven. We know that He will return as He promised. He will come back.

When the nobleman comes back he calls in the servants. One received one mina and now had ten. One servant received one mina and now had five. And one servant received one mina, but hid it so he still had only one mina.

The servants knew their master to be loving and compassionate. They had no worries about investing the money and letting it increase. When the master came back they were ready. No doubt they knew that even if the money was not increased the master would be pleased with them. But the servant who hid the money thought the nobleman was severe man. He was actually afraid of the master! So he did nothing.

So what does this mean? Jesus has gone away and will return. In the meantime He has given you incredible gifts. So make use of those gifts! Be in the Word, receive the Supper, live in your Baptismal grace. But don't hide these gifts! Use them. Bring others to see how generous the nobleman is to you and them. Whether you fail or succeed know that your master is loving and compassionate. He has given you the kingdom.

Prayer: Father, You have given me such wondrous gifts. Grant me zeal is telling others about Your mercy and grace that they too would see how loving You are. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Friday, March 27

Two Sons (Matthew 21.28-32)

The tax collectors and prostitutes hadn't done what they were told in the law. They had sinned. God told them to love their neighbor and they stole. God told them to live pure and chase lives, but they sold their bodies. God told them to have Him as their God, yet they refused. They were sinners!

Everyone knew it. The Pharisees looked down on these sinners because their sins were so obvious. But now the tax collectors and prostitutes were entering the kingdom of heaven! They were flocking

to Jesus to see His miracles, hear His Word, and have table fellowship with Him. They were doing what they were told to, come near to Jesus.

The Pharisees thought they were doing everything right. They gave lip service to the law. They gave their gifts in public and made their prayers long and loud. They looked good on the outside. But on the inside they were sinful. They were full of greed, hatred, anger, lust, jealousy, and pride. They were breaking God's law on the inside while looking good on the outside.

The Pharisees were the brother who said the right thing and did the wrong. The tax collectors and prostitutes were the brother who said the wrong thing but did the right. Neither brother was holy. Neither was good. Both were sinners. Jesus invites both- Pharisees and sinners, to work in the kingdom. Jesus invites all to realize their need for a Savior.

The way of righteousness is through the law. The law was given to show us how sinful we are that we would know our need for a Savior. The law breaks down our pride and shows us our sins. When it is evident that we have no place to turn, Jesus steps in. He does all the work of our salvation for us. He forgives and saves so that we can work in the vineyard.

So you, who are redeemed by the blood of Christ, work! Be in Word and prayer. Live like a Christian that others would see. Encourage all to follow the Savior you have. There is still time for more to be called into the kingdom. Bring your brothers into the kingdom.

Prayer: Father in heaven, I thank You that You have given me the law to show me my sins. Grant me to seek Your mercy, in Jesus, for my forgiveness. Let me live as Your child that many would see and join me in following Jesus. In His Name. Amen.

Saturday, March 28

Wicked Tenants (Matthew 21.33-44, Mark 12.1-11, Luke 20.9-18)

This parable must have been as unbelievable as the others for those first hearing it. What tenants would kill the son of the master thinking that the vineyard would be their's? There would be no one else who would get the vineyard? Amazing how evil those tenants were! But that's the point of the parable.

Their sin knows no bounds. The master had given them jobs, but when he came looking for the fruit they refused to give it. The tenants beat one servant, killed another, and stoned a third. The master assumes that the tenants would respect his son. Of course, that's not what happens as they kill the son.

The prophets, priests, and even kings were given to Israel to direct them to worship rightly. But usually, the people ignored them. They so often went their own way killing or stoning the messengers God sent.

Would it be foolish for the Father to send His Son to such sinners? The Father knows what the tenants would do to His Son. They will reject Him, hate Him, and crucify Him. But the Father still sends His Son.

The Son is the stone the builders rejected, He is the cornerstone of salvation. All this is the Lord's doing and how marvelous it is to us! It is so marvelous because the master knew what was going to happen. Jesus knew what was going to happen to Him and yet He still came to this earth. He willingly took the punishment meant for you that you would be saved.

For us worthless tenants Jesus came. For us who sin against Him day after day, He died. For us who disobey the law, He gives forgiveness. Isn't this marvelous!

Prayer: Father, You gave Your Son to die for a worthless sinner like me. I rejoice that Jesus forgives my sins and grants me life eternal freely. Grant me to make Jesus the cornerstone of my life. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Sunday, March 29

Invitation to a Wedding Banquet (Matthew 22.2-14)

There's so much violence in this parable. A city is destroyed and a man without the proper clothing is thrown out of the wedding feast. What's going on here?

God the Father is the King in this parable. The Son, well that's Jesus. And this meal. Well, the meal is many different things. It's the tree of life, the Passover, the manna in the wilderness, the bread of presence, the meal on Sinai, the feeding of thousands by Jesus, the Lord's Supper. The meal in the parable is any and every meal that pictures the salvation we have in Christ. This meal has always been ready. From the time of Adam and Eve people have been invited to come to the feast. God has been ready! Even more, God expects people to want to come to this feast; that is, to receive salvation.

Why would those in the Old Testament reject God and worship Baal? Why would they forget the Passover? Why would they neglect the Day of Atonement? Why would those in Jesus' day reject Him? Why would they not want to eat with Him and hear Him? Why would those today ignore worship? The invitation goes out in every age that sinners would come to the feast.

But many don't. Those who refuse will be destroyed eternally in hell. They don't want to come to the feast, so God won't force them. He will give them over to what they want; an existence without God.

But what about the guy who is in the feast, but not wearing the right clothes? If he had said anything, made any sort of excuse, he would have been permitted to stay. But he said nothing. He had no

relationship with the King. Sinners must be covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness. It is a reminder that everyone is invited to the feast, but few are chosen. You are chosen. You are covered in the robe of Christ's righteousness through your Baptism into Him. You are forgiven.

Prayer: Father in heaven, in Your mercy You invite me to the feast. Cover me with forgiveness that I would have a relationship with You and receive eternal life. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Monday, March 30

Signs of the Future from a Fig Tree (Matthew 24.32-35, Mark 13.28-29, Luke 21.29-31)

They know the fig tree. When the branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves it is obvious that summer is near. Even a child could tell you when summer was coming! How obvious! But they have no idea about the coming of the King. Who understood?

If you know about the fig tree how much more should you know the coming of the King. He is at the very gate and they had no idea! What were they thinking! How could they not rejoice and be glad at His coming? How did they not understand?

It will happen before that generation passes away. It's happening is sure, as sure as the Word of God. Heaven and earth could pass away, but this will happen.

They had no idea in the first century what Jesus had come to do. He was traveling on to Jerusalem, but who understood? They could interpret the fig tree and when the seasons were changing, but had no idea about Jesus. God was dwelling on earth. He was there. He was going to die and who could interpret that?

Regardless, Jesus travelled on to the tree. Amid the faithlessness and unbelief of sinner Jesus willingly died. The King came to the throne and laid down His life. His words of promise shall never pass away.

Interpret this rightly. Understand what Jesus is talking about. Know that as Jesus stretches out His arms on the tree He pays for the sins of sinners. He dies in your place. This can never pass away, but stands fast eternally. Dwell there, in the cross of Jesus. The death He died, He died for you, that the life you live you would live for Him.

Prayer: Father, grant me to rightly interpret and understand what Jesus has done for me. He had died to forgive my sins and grant me life eternal. Let Your Word never pass away from me. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Tuesday, March 31

Wise and Foolish Servants (Matthew 24.45-51)

Who is the wise servant? The one who his master has put over his household? The master must really trust that servant. The servant must have proved himself to the master time after time. How could the trusted servant not continue to earn the master's trust by being faithful even while the master is away?

Of course, there might be servants who would try to use the time of the master's absence to beat other servants or get drunk. These servants might assume that master would never come back from the trip or just wouldn't know what they did.

What is it for you? Would you be the wise servant or the unfaithful? Your master has left and placed you in charge of His kingdom. Jesus has ascended into heaven forty days after Easter and gives the keys of the kingdom to His church. You are a servant in His kingdom while He is away. Will you be wise or foolish?

To be foolish is simple. Just give into that sinful nature. Ignore the things of your master. Don't be in His Word or receiving His Supper. Ignore His house and behave like no servant of your master would. Just live like the world.

To be a wise servant takes work. Don't do as your sinful nature would have you do. Be in the Word. Be around the house of your master. Receive His gifts as often as possible. Pray back to Him. Live like a Christian that others would see the sort of servant you want to be.

You want to be a wise servant. Not to win anything or earn anything, but because you know all that your master has done for you. He has died to forgive your sins. How can you not serve Him while He is away. You know He is coming back so live as a wise servant.

Prayer: Farther in heaven, grant me to be a wise servant. I know all that Jesus has done for my salvation. In gratitude, let me serve You with joy that others would see and follow You too. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Wednesday, April 1

Wise and Foolish Virgins (Matthew 25.1-13)

They were ready. But some were more ready. Who could have predicted that the bridegroom would be so late in coming to the party? The foolish just didn't have enough oil for their lamps. Of course, they could just borrow some from the wise. But should the wise share their oil, all the lamps might go out and that would really be terrible for everyone, including the bridegroom!

When the bridegroom did show up some were ready and some were not. There was no more time. Those ready ushered the bridegroom into the party with their lighted lamps. Those not ready were away

trying to get more oil. And by the time they got back, there was no way there were getting into the party. So what's this parable about?

Be ready! Jesus is the bridegroom. Are you the foolish or wise? Are you ready or not ready? You have no idea when the bridegroom is going to come back, are you ready? What if He delays a long time? What then, are you ready? Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour. Be ready!

How can you be ready? Be in Christ. Live in your Baptismal reality. You have been forgiven at the cross, so live like it. Confess your sins to your Lord and be forgiven. Hear His Word and speak back to Him in prayer. Be in His house, in worship to receive His gifts. You can't get faith from someone else, so be in Christ now to strengthen the faith you have.

Be ready because when Jesus comes back there will be no more time to prepare. Either you are in Christ or not. There will be no more time to repent or try to be faithful. Be ready now so that when He comes back you are set to head to the wedding feast of the Lamb and His bride. Be ready for the joy that accompanies arrival of the bridegroom. Prayer: Father, grant me to be ready. Give me faithfulness and zeal that I would be in the Word of Jesus and in worship. Strengthen my faith as I trust and rely in Him alone. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Thursday, April 2

Servants must Remain Watchful (Mark 13.35-37)

Being ready seems to be a constant theme in many of the parables that Jesus tells during Holy Week. It makes sense, doesn't it? Something huge was about to happen and were the disciples ready? Were they awake and alert to what was going to happen to Jesus?

The disciples were not ready. They were caught unaware when Judas came to betray Jesus. They had no idea what was going on while Jesus was on trial with Pilate and Herod and Pilate again. They felt helpless as Jesus was led out to be crucified. Despite the words and parables of Jesus, they were not ready.

Jesus speaks these parables primarily to ready His disciples for His death. Stay awake! Be ready! Don't sleep through all that God will do in Christ! This has happened already. Jesus was betrayed and has already died on the cross. He has paid the full price for the sins of sinners. Secondly, Jesus speaks this to you, that you would be ready for His second coming. That you would be awake and ready.

He will come back at an hour that you don't know. So be ready. Be more ready than the disciples. The master will come suddenly and there will be no more time to prepare so be ready now. Prepare now.

Prepare by being in worship. Receive Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins. Strengthen your faith now while there is time. Read and

study His Word. Receive the Supper. Live in your Baptismal grace. Live like a Christian in this dark world. Be ready. Be more ready than the disciples during Holy Week!

You know your master. He is loving and merciful. He is full of compassion. The day when He comes back will be a day of joy for you. He will raise your body and perfect it. He will bring you, body and soul, into eternal life. Be ready because this will be better than you can imagine.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, the disciples were not ready for the death that Jesus died. Grant me to be ready. Give me Jesus for the forgiveness of my sins. Let me live in Jesus that I would be ready for His second coming. In His Name. Amen.

Friday, April 3

Three Servants given Talents (Matthew 25.14-30)

The three servants view their master very differently. The first two believe that he is gracious and loving. After all, he gave them five and two talents. They wanted to invest his money. They did the best they could, because they wanted to, and the money grew. They benefited their master. They were motivated by love.

The third servant knew only that the master was a harsh man. He did not love the master nor did he care to invest the master's money. It would take work and effort. Why should he even bother?

This third servant is a reminder of the first use of the law- that curb. This use is all the commands of God, those 'Thou shall not' directions. It seems like God is a harsh master with all that He commands us not to do. Living in this use of the law there is no positive motivation for the sinner. What could we ever hope to accomplish under the law? Why even bother!

The first two servants live in the guide of the law. They know the commands of the master, but they don't find the commands burdensome. Why not? They know the character of their master. He is loving and merciful. They are motivated by love. They want to work hard for the master. They want to benefit him as best they can.

God's commands don't change, but the way we view them sure does. For those who know the character of God the commands of God are not burdensome. In love we want to follow what God directs and the commands of God guide us to do. Sinners under grace, after all, know all that God has done for them.

So be the servants who want to serve. Be the servants who know the character of the master. Know what God has done for you and be motivated by the Gospel to serve Him. Not because you must, under the law, but because you want to. You get to have one God. You get

to honor His Name and His day. You get to serve and love your neighbor as yourself. You get to! What a joy!

Prayer: Father in heaven, I know all that You have done for me through Jesus. You forgive my sins through Jesus' death. Motivate me to love and serve my neighbor out of love for You. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Saturday, April 4

Sheep and Goats Separated (Matthew 25.31-46)

This section doesn't sound like a parable, it's a little too literal. Jesus really doesn't use a story to describe a deeper meaning, rather the story is what is going to happen. Jesus will gather all people and separate them as a shepherd would separate sheep and goats. Those who have done good shall receive eternal life and those who have done evil will go to eternal death.

But there's a little more to this than just that. The believers have no idea that they have done good and the unbelievers think they have done good. How can no one know? Jesus brings it down to the believers having helped others and the unbelievers have not helped others in need. Is this all it takes to get into heaven, just help people in need?

There is only one way to eternal life; be perfect as God is perfect. There is no other way beside this. Perfection is the standard for eternal life. The believers understand that they don't live up to that standard. They know their sin and their need for a savior. They confess their sins and rely on Jesus for their salvation. What could they do to help their cause? Nothing. Jesus must do all.

So when Jesus commends their works they have no idea what He is talking about. They relied on Jesus, not their works. They were justified by grace, through faith in Christ, not by works. But everything done in faith is counted as a good work. Jesus points to these as proof of their faith.

But for the unbelievers nothing done is good. Without faith it is impossible to please God. They may have looked good before other men, but before God there is nothing good. Their sins are still theirs and they are condemned because of them.

Works are not what save sinners, but others can see the faith that believers have. Jesus points to believers helping others. Motivated by the Gospel this happens all the time. But the sheep know that their salvation is not dependent on their works. Rather, they are saved by Jesus' death on the tree. Motivated by that love, believers want to serve others.

Prayer: Father, I thank You that You send Jesus to save me from my sins. Grant me to reach out in love to those around me and serve them.

I know that my works will not save me but are a reaction to the love You have for me. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Sunday, April 5

Purpose of the Parables Matthew 13.10-17

We've been through the parables of Jesus. But why would Jesus speak in parables in the first place? He answers that, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven." You know the secrets. What secrets? Jesus is talking about Himself being the Savior who would die on the cross.

This might not sound like much of a secret, but in the first century it was. Who knew this was going to happen? If Jesus spoke openly about his death the Pharisees and High Priest would have sought to kill Him earlier. So Jesus speaks in parables that those who know may understand.

Do you understand? All the parables center on Jesus and what He has done for you. He has died in your place on the tree and only through His death are you forgiven. These parables direct you to see and understand all that Jesus has done for you.

Do you understand? All that Jesus does and speaks is for you. All the sermons He speaks are for you, that you would understand how merciful He is. All the parables He speaks are for you, that you would have a deeper understanding of who He is and what He does for you. All the miracles He does are for you that you would see that He is God in flesh and know the ultimate miracle of the cross. All Jesus does is for you.

Jesus still works for you. He works through the Sacraments to join you to the death that He died. Through Baptism and the Supper you are given grace and mercy through the death of Jesus. That you would know, for certain, that you are forgiven. Through the Word you are directed to see the mercy that Jesus has for you. Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear!

Blessed indeed are you for Jesus has died for you. He directs you to His death and resurrection that you would know His mercy given to you. This is no secret, but given freely to you.

Prayer: Father in heaven, I give You thanks for the parables of Jesus. They direct me to see the joy Jesus has in dying for my sins on the tree. Bring Jesus to me through Word and Sacrament, forgive my sins, and strengthen my faith that I would be a witness for others. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.