



St. John's Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



Mark 4 – Parables

January 14, 2024 10:30 Service of the Word

Today we read a series of parables from Jesus. Although perhaps they aren't parables so much as they are riddles. They are quirky teachings making comparisons with things that aren't usually compared. Perhaps the strangest thing though is why Jesus uses parables. He says it is so people do not understand (Mark 4:12). This is puzzling indeed! We'll explore that question and see other things going on as Jesus teaches people about God's coming kingdom.

Welcome to worship today!

If you are a visitor we invite you to sign the guest book in the back of the sanctuary.

Large print bulletins are available on the usher's stand.

† GATHERING †

Prelude and Announcements

Apostles' Greeting

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

Confession and Forgiveness

P: Blessed be the Holy Trinity, one God,
creator of darkness and light,
word of truth,
wind sweeping over the waters.

C: Amen.

P: Let us confess our sin the presence of God and of one another.

Silence for reflection and self-examination

P: God, our rock and refuge,

C: we pour out our hearts before you.

We have known you but have not always loved you.

**We have wounded one another
and sinned against you.**

**We have not always recognized the Holy Spirit
dwelling in each of us.**

Remember your covenant.

Renew your creation.

Restore us,

that we might proclaim your good news to all.

Amen.

P: The voice of the Lord is upon the waters.

God has spoken:

The time of grace is now.

In Jesus, the reign of God has come near.

By the authority of Jesus Christ,
your sins are forgiven.

You are God's beloved.

C: Amen.

Gathering Hymn Lead Me to the Rock
(For music turn to Hymn 20 in the Songbook binder)

1. **When my heart is overwhelmed,
Hear my cry,
Give heed to my prayer,
And my eyes are dim with tears,
O Father, make them clear;
From the ends of all the earth,
When my heart is fainting,
Let me know that You have heard,
Lead me into safety.**

Chorus (Repeat Chorus at end)
**And lead me to the Rock,
The Rock that is higher,
Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.
Lead me to the Rock,
The Rock that is higher,
Higher than I.**

2. **You, O Lord have been for me
A refuge from my enemies.
Let me live within your strength,
In the shelter of Your wings;
From the ends of all the earth,
When my heart is fainting,
Let me know that You have heard,
Lead me into safety.** *Chorus*

Text and music by Lynn DeSchazo. CCLI # 80971. Copyright 1989 Interity's Hosanna! Music, Admin: Integrity Music, Inc.

Greeting (2 Corinthians 13:13)

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

Gathering Dialog (John 1)

A: In the beginning was the Word,

C: and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

A: In the Word was life,

C: and the life was the light of all people.

A: The Word became flesh and lived among us,

C: and we have seen his glory, full of grace and truth.

Prayer of the Day

A: Let us pray...

Holy God, our strength and our redeemer, by your Spirit hold us forever, that through your grace we may worship you and faithfully serve you, follow you and joyfully find you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

† WORD †

First Reading 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

B: ²⁶Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, ²⁹so that no one might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹in order that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

After the reading the reader may say: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

Scripture Poetry Proverbs 15:1-8 (*read responsively*)

D: A soft answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger.

**C: The tongue of the wise dispenses knowledge,
but the mouths of fools pour out folly.**

D: The eyes of the LORD are in every place,
keeping watch on the evil and the good.

**C: A gentle tongue is a tree of life,
but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.**

D: A fool despises a parent's instruction,
but the one who heeds admonition is prudent.

**C: In the house of the righteous there is much treasure,
but trouble befalls the income of the wicked.**

D: The lips of the wise spread knowledge;
not so the minds of fools.

**C: The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD,
but the prayer of the upright is his delight.**

Gospel Acclamation (Mark 4:24)

**C: Alleluia. Pay attention to what you hear; the measure you give
will be the measure you get, and still more will be given you. Alleluia.**

Gospel Reading Mark 4:1-34

The gospel is announced:

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark the 4th chapter.

C: Glory to you O Lord.

Again [Jesus] began to teach beside the sea. Such a very large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat on the sea and sat there, while the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. ²He began to teach them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them:³“Listen! A sower went out to sow. ⁴And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up quickly, since it had no depth of soil. ⁶And when the sun rose, it was scorched; and since it had no root, it withered away. ⁷Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. ⁸Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.” ⁹And he said, “Let anyone with ears to hear listen!”

¹⁰When he was alone, those who were around him along with the twelve asked him about the parables. ¹¹And he said to them, “To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside, everything comes in parables; ¹²in order that

‘they may indeed look, but not perceive,
and may indeed listen, but not understand;
so that they may not turn again and be forgiven.’”

¹³And he said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? Then how will you understand all the parables? ¹⁴The sower sows the word. ¹⁵These are the ones on the path where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. ¹⁶And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: when they hear the word, they immediately receive it with joy. ¹⁷But they have no root, and endure only for a while; then, when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. ¹⁸And others are those sown among the thorns: these are the ones who hear the word, ¹⁹but the cares of the world, and the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things come in and choke the word, and it yields nothing. ²⁰And these are the ones sown on

the good soil: they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.”

²¹He said to them, “Is a lamp brought in to be put under the bushel basket, or under the bed, and not on the lampstand? ²²For there is nothing hidden, except to be disclosed; nor is anything secret, except to come to light. ²³Let anyone with ears to hear listen!” ²⁴And he said to them, “Pay attention to what you hear; the measure you give will be the measure you get, and still more will be given you. ²⁵For to those who have, more will be given; and from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away.”

²⁶He also said, “The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, ²⁷and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. ²⁸The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. ²⁹But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.”

³⁰He also said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? ³¹It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; ³²yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”

³³With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; ³⁴he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

After the reading:

P: The gospel of the Lord

C: Praise to you O Christ.

Children's Sermon

Sermon

Hymn of the Day Almighty God, Your Word Is Cast
(For music see Hymn 516 in the Red Hymnal)

- 1. Almighty God, your word is cast
like seed into the ground;
now let the dew of heav'n descend
and righteous fruits abound.**
- 2. Let not the sly satanic foe
this holy seed remove,**

**but give it root in ev'ry heart
to bring forth fruits of love.**

**3. Let not the world's deceitful cares
the rising plant destroy,
but let it yield a hundredfold
the fruits of peace and joy.**

**4. So when the precious seed is sown,
life giving grace bestow,
that all whose souls the truth receive
its saving pow'r may know.**

Text: John Cawood, 1775-1852, alt. Music: Jay. Day, *Psalter*, 1562

Apostles' Creed

P: We confirm our faith with the Apostles' Creed

**C: I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Peace

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us share that peace with one another.

The congregation may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.

Special Music

Hymn of Thanksgiving As the offering is brought forward:

Lord Let My Heart Be Good Soil

For music turn to Hymn 713 in the Blue Hymnal

**Lord, let my heart be good soil,
open to the seed of your Word.**

**Lord, let my heart be good soil,
where love can grow and peace is understood.**

When my heart is hard, break the stone away.

When my heart is cold, warm it with the day.

When my heart is lost, lead me on your way.

Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart,

Lord, let my heart be good soil.

Text and music: Handt Hanson, b. 1950, Copyright 1985 Prince of Peace Publishing/Changing Church, Inc.

✠ PRAYER ✠

Offering Prayer

P: Let us pray: Liberating God,

C: you break the bonds of injustice and let the oppressed go free.

Receive these offerings in thanksgiving for all your works of merciful power, and shape us as people of your justice and freedom. You we magnify and adore, through Jesus our Savior. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

P: With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

The pastor will begin the prayer with a petition and then invites the congregation to add additional petitions and thanksgivings. Please conclude your petition with: Lord in your mercy,

The congregation will respond: **Hear our prayer.**

The pastor concludes the prayer:

P: Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

C: Amen.

Lord's Prayer

P: Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**C: Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,**

thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.

† SENDING †

Blessing

P: God who names you,
Christ who claims you,
and the Holy Spirit who dwells in you,
bless you and remain with you always.
C: Amen.

Sending Hymn You Are the Seed

(For music turn to Hymn 753 in the Blue Hymnal)

1. **You are the seed that will grow a new sprout;**
you're a star that will shine in the night;
you are the yeast and a small grain of salt,
a beacon to glow in the dark.
You are the dawn that will bring a new day;
you're the wheat that will bear golden grain;
you are a sting and a soft, gentle touch,
to witness wherever you go.

Refrain

Go, my friends, go to the world,
proclaim the great love of God;
messengers to tell the way of life,
peace and pardon for all.
Be, my friends, a loyal witness,
from the dead Christ arose;
“Lo, I’ll be with your forevermore,
till the end of the world.”

**2. You are the flame that will light-en the dark,
so resplendent with hope, faith and love;
you are the shepherds to lead the whole world
to waters and pastures of peace.
“You are the friends that I chose for myself,
you’re the word that I want to proclaim.
You are the new reign of God built on rock,
where justice and truth are at home.”** *Refrain*

**3. You are the life that will nurture the plant;
you’re the waves in a turbulent sea;
yesterday’s yeast is beginning to rise,
a new loaf of bread it will yield.
There is no place for a city to hide,
there’s no mountain can cover its might;
let your light shine so that your loving works
give honor and glory to God.** *Refrain*

Text: Cesareo Gabarain, tr. Raquel Gutierrez-Achon and Skinner Chavez-Melo, text copyright 1979 Ediciones Paulines, admin. OCP Publications, tr. Copyright The United Methodist Publishing House; Music: Cesareo Gabarain, arr. Skinner Chavez-Melo, arrangement Copyright 1987 Estate of Skinner Chavez-Melo

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord!

C: God’s work. Our hands.



"Choosing a house is a big decision, Dear.
Maybe we should ask God
instead of consulting the lava lamp."

Worship assistants TODAY:

Greeters and Ushers	Sue Kaufmann
Acolyte	Thomas Bullwinkle
Counters	Michele Myers and Helen Crown
Coffee Hour	Michele Myers

Worship assistants for next Sunday, January 21

Greeters and Ushers	Helen Crown
Acolyte	Alyssa Young
Altar Care	Gary Boisseau
Communion Assistants	Gary Boisseau
Counters	Mary and Greg Zuege
Coffee Hour	Sandwiches – Annual Meeting

Scripture readings from the *New Revised Standard Version Bible* copyright 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States. Psalm from *The Psalter* copyright 1994, Liturgical Training Publications. Variable worship texts from *Sundays and Seasons 2024* copyright 2023 Augsburg Fortress.

St. John's Lutheran Church
888 County Road 9, Victor, NY 14564
stjohnsvictor.com (585) 924-5192
The Rev. Jonathan Deibler, Pastor
William Shi, Pianist