



St. John's Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



Mark 4 – Parables

January 14, 2021 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!

This order of worship is designed to accompany what is happening live on Zoom. In order to make things work smoothly please keep your computer's microphone off unless you have a speaking part. It may be helpful to use a headset or earbuds to minimize feedback. You are welcome to use the chat feature to ask questions or provide feedback. Following worship we will have a time for those who would like to chat.

† GATHERING †

Prelude and Announcements

Confession and Forgiveness

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God,
whose voice is upon the waters,
whose mercy is poured out upon all people,
whose goodness cascades over all creation.

C: Amen.

P: Let us confess our sin, trusting in the abundant grace of God.

Silence for reflection and self-examination

P: Holy God,

C: you search us and know us.

You are acquainted with all our ways.

**We confess that our hearts are burdened by sin-
our own sins and the broken systems that bind us.**

We turn inward, failing to follow your love outward.

We distrust those who are not like us.

**We exploit the earth and its resources
and fail to consider generations to come.**

**Forgive us, gracious God,
for all we have done and left undone.**

**Even before the words are on our tongues,
you know them;**

receive them in your divine mercy.

Amen.

P: How vast is God's grace!

Through the power and promise of Christ Jesus,
our sins are washed away

and we are claimed as God's own beloved.

Indeed, we are forgiven.

In the wake of God's forgiveness,

we are called to be the beloved community
living out Christ's justice

and the Spirit's reconciling peace.

C: Amen.

Gathering Hymn Lord Let My Heart Be Good Soil
For music turn to Hymn 512 in the Red 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.

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)

P: In the beginning was the Word,

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

P: In the Word was life,

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

P: 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

B: A soft answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger.
The tongue of the wise dispenses knowledge,
but the mouths of fools pour out folly.
The eyes of the LORD are in every place,
keeping watch on the evil and the good.
A gentle tongue is a tree of life,
but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.
A fool despises a parent’s instruction,
but the one who heeds admonition is prudent.
In the house of the righteous there is much treasure,
but trouble befalls the income of the wicked.
The lips of the wise spread knowledge;
not so the minds of fools.
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

✠ INCORPORATION OF NEW MEMBERS ✠

Peter and Kathleen Eppeira and William and Elynore Bullwinkle have been worshipping with St. John's for some time and have expressed a desire to join the congregation. We use the Affirmation of Baptism service to incorporate them into the congregation.

P: Let us pray:

Merciful God, we thank you for these sisters and brothers, whom you have made your own by water and the Word in baptism. You have called them to yourself, enlightened them with the gifts of your Spirit, and nourished them in the community of faith. Uphold in your servants the gifts and promises of baptism, and unite the hearts of all whom you have brought to new birth. We ask this in the name of Christ.

C: Amen

Profession of Faith

P: I ask you to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, reject sin, and confess the faith of the church.

P: Do you renounce the devil and all the forces that defy God?

Response: I renounce them.

P: Do you renounce the powers of this world that rebel against God?

Response: I renounce them.

P: Do you renounce the ways of sin that draw you from God?

Response: I renounce them.

P: Do you believe in God the Father?

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

P: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

**C: 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.**

P: Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

**C: 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.**

Affirmation in the Presence of the Assembly

P: You have made public profession of your faith. Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in holy baptism:

to live among God's faithful people,
to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper,
to proclaim the good news of God in Christ Jesus through word and deed,
to serve all people, following the example of Jesus,
and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?

Response: I do and I ask God to help and guide me.

P: People of God, do you promise to support these sisters and brothers and pray for them in their life of Christ?

C: We do, and we ask God to help and guide us.

P: Let us pray:

We give you thanks, O God, that through water and the Holy Spirit you give us new birth, cleanse us from sin, and raise us to eternal life.

Stir up in these men and women the gift of your Holy Spirit: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence, both now and forever.

C: Amen

P: Let us rejoice with these sisters and brothers in Christ.

C: We rejoice with you in the life of baptism.

Together we will give thanks and praise to God and proclaim the good news to all the world.

† PRAYER †

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. These three petitions will be read by people in the congregation:

A: Lord, we ask that in the days ahead the people of our nation may be peaceful as we inaugurate a new president. Guide the work of all elected leaders so that they may act with justice and integrity. Lord in your mercy...

C: Hear our prayer.

B: Help us to sow the seed of your good news. Be with the missionaries we support: the Rev. Karen Anderson and the Rev. Matthew Nickoloff. Lord in your mercy...

C: Hear our prayer.

E: Help all those who are suffering from the coronavirus, and all those who are mourning the death of loved ones because of the violence. We ask that as we move forward people will act in wise and safe ways. Give strength to all those who are administering vaccines. Lord in your mercy...

C: 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.

Peace

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

C: And also with you.

A: We share that peace with one another.

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

Special Music

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 the creator strengthen you;
Jesus the beloved fill you;
and the Holy Spirit the comforter keep in you peace.
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.**

Announcements

Office Hours

Pastor Jon anticipates being in the office:

Monday – morning and afternoon

Tuesday –afternoon

Wednesday – morning and afternoon

Thursday - morning

He can be available other times by appointment. Please call the church:
(585) 924-5192 or pastor’s cell: (585) 281-3595

Newsletter Deadline

The February newsletter will be distributed on January 21st. Please have all articles to the church office by Wednesday January 20.

Church Playground – Girl Scout Gold Project Can & Bottle Collection

Kelsey Sackett is working to replace the church playground for her Girl Scout Gold Award project. Please consider donating your deposit bottles and cans to help pay for it. A collection bin is in the old entrance room.

2021 Annual Meeting

The 2021 annual congregational meeting will be held on Sunday January 31st after the 10:30 worship service. It will take place via Zoom; being a continuation of the same link we used for worship. There will be the usual items on the agenda: review of reports, elections for church council, and the church budget. If you have any questions please talk to Pastor Jon before the meeting.

Offering Envelopes

2021 offering envelopes are available on a table in the gathering area. You can stop by church and pick yours up. If you need access to the building and don't remember the code for the key please ask Pastor Jon.

Food Cupboard News

December was record-breaking! Not including the Christmas food baskets, we gave out 1062 boxes to 990 households. 273 seniors, 1,324 adults and 914 children.

We are planning for a January 30th mass distribution of food and can use: Bear Creek soup mixes, any type of soup crackers and frozen veggies.

The office will continue to be open Mondays and Wednesdays 8 am to 4 pm and by appointment for donation drop off.

We will continue our drive thru food distributions on Wednesdays 2 to 4 p.m. Other opportunities to receive food this month at times convenient for people who work during the day will be posted on Facebook.

Our appointment line is temporarily shut down, until the first week in March. We will post on Facebook mid-February with an exact date for re-starting and the appointment line number again. If you are in emergency food need please call (585)924-2720.

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St. John's Lutheran Church

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The Rev. Jonathan Deibler, Pastor
Nathan Cheung, Pianist