

8<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost July 26, 2020

**Collect:** O GOD, the protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: Increase and multiply upon us your mercy; that, with you as our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we lose not the things eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Lessons:** 1 Kings 3:5-12

Psalm 119:129-136

Romans 8:26-39

Matthew 13:31-35, 44-52

**Sermon:** Again, Jesus is speaking to the crowd that is following him in parables. Parables are short stories with a point and normally they about something common people have a knowledge of or an experience with.

In last week's Gospel lesson, it was about the man who had sown good seeds in his field, but weeds also grew among the good seed. From that parable we can conclude that even in the best of times bad things may happen. But God will decide when to remove the weeds and who (the good seed) gets into his barn: heaven.

In today's Gospel lesson Jesus uses five parables to explain the worth of the kingdom of Heaven.

In the first parable Jesus uses the size of the Mustard seed. It is the tiniest seed of all but grows to be a giant tree. From being almost invisible it grows to provide branches for birds to rest in and it's leaves and can also be made into medicine.

In the second parable a woman takes yeast and mixes it with flour so that it can be made into large amounts of baked goods. In this way she can provide an income for herself.

In the third parable Jesus tells of a person finding a treasure in a field and he is so happy that he sells all that he owns so that he can buy that field.

In the fourth parable, a merchant searching for pearls finds one that is so exquisite that he sells all that he owns so that he can buy it.

In the fifth parable, fishermen throw a net into the sea, the net is filled with every kind of fish. They draw the net to the shore and then they sit down and begin to separate the fish. The ones they can sell, the good fish, they put into a basket. The ones they can't sell they cast aside.

In each of these parables something initially is changed or given up resulting in achieving something of greater value.

Maybe Jesus is asking a question. What are you willing to give up or change to get into heaven? Are you willing **to surrender all**, as one Christian song declares? What will it cost you to live a life that will be acceptable to God and guarantee you a place in heaven?

Through these parables Jesus implies that all will be happy and will have achieved or own something better or greater than they already have. Note that there is no hesitation, when the object is found, there is no hesitation. Action is decided on right away.

Jesus is saying that heaven is better or greater than anything we have and that we should be willing to pay the price to be there.

Jesus continually says: "The kingdom of heaven is like" He then goes on to compare it to something that we really like or have and asks what is it worth, to achieve or get something that is far better.

The bottom line is what are you willing to pay to get to heaven?

Robert Ruark in his book Something of Value shares an African proverb: **If a man does away with his traditional way of living and throws away his good customs. He had better make certain he has something of value to replace them.**

Is being in the presence of God something of value to you? Amen.

