

## ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – 7/27/08

### INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY

*In baptism God promises that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. In today's gospel Jesus offers images from everyday life that reveal to us the reign of God. It is like a tree that becomes a safe and sheltering home, like yeast that penetrates and expands, like a treasured pearl, like a net that gains a great catch. Even as we seek the riches of God's reign, the great surprise is that God's grace finds us first!*

After a moment of silent meditation to prepare ourselves for worship,  
we will begin the liturgy.

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

**Lector: Please read the introduction, then the citation (i.e.. “The First Reading is from..... chapter of ....., verses .....” then the text. )**

#### ***Introduction***

*The young shepherd Jacob met his match in the old shepherd, Laban, his father-in-law. Laban gave Jacob his older daughter, Leah, when he had promised to give him Rachel. Jacob worked fourteen years to earn his favorite wife, Rachel, but the years seemed like a few days because of his love for her.*

#### ***Introduction***

*These words celebrate the depth of God's actions for us. Through Christ's death for us and the activity of the Spirit praying for us, we are fused to God's love poured out in Jesus Christ. Nothing, not even death itself, is able to separate us from such incredible divine love.*

### **NEW TESTAMENT READING: Romans 8:26-30**

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes

for the saints according to the will of God.

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written,

"For your sake we are being killed all day long;  
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered."

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### ***Introduction***

*Throughout Matthew's gospel, Jesus and his disciples proclaim the good news that "the kingdom of heaven is near!" Here, Jesus offers several brief parables that explore the implications of this announcement for people's lives.*

### **GOSPEL READING: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52**

He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire,

where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Have you understood all this? They answered, "Yes." And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**