**I Love to Tell the Story**

**Day 91: Secretly growing seed**

**Mark 4:26-29**

Guided reflection:

Jesus must have been teaching during planting season or maybe harvest season, because many of his parables are about seeds being sown and various conditions that affect harvest. This short story only told in Mark, adds to the point that if we allow the “seed” (Word of God) to be planted in our hearts, we do not have to use our own efforts for goodness to develop. That is the Spirit’s job! We just have to be fertile soil, ready and willing to accept what God (the sower) plants in our hearts. If we receive love, it will just be natural to show love to others! Can you think about a time when God used you and you did not even know you had it in you?

Guided prayer:

*“O great and wise sower of seeds, I open my heart to you and ask that you create in me the kind of heart that is open to any seed of truth you send my way. I step out of the way and allow your spirit to work in and through me. Amen.”*

**Day 92: Parable of the weeds**

**Matt 13: 24-30**

Guided reflection:

I sure wish life was easy, don’t you? Why do weeds – distractions that sap me of my energy – have to grow along side of the things I am trying to do for good? Why can’t we have some kind of spiritual “round-up” that we can spray on our hearts so that weeds and distractions cannot even grow in our hearts? We need to face reality – in this life we have tribulations… Jesus said so and we know so! We are to just keep growing in Christ right along with all the other stuff. Then at the end of life, what has been done for Christ will be what will last. Where are the weeds of life choking you right now? Where is it hard to see if you are doing good or just adding to confusion? Remember, God knows you heart and God is the judge – not others and not even yourself!

Guided prayer:

*“Thank you, Loving God, for being the loving harvester who knows what I have done for you that is good… and knows and tosses aside the things I have done for other motives. Thank you for being the judge and not allowing even me to be the one to judge my life. Toss away from me what is a detriment… and allow your word to flourish in me. Amen”*

**Day 93: Mustard seeds**

**Matt 13: 31-32; Mark 4: 30-32; Luke 13: 18-19**

Guided reflection:

More seeds/weeds/grain stories! I love these kinds of stories. Little becomes MUCH when placed in God’s hands. Just think, faith like a tiny mustard seed – the smallest of all seeds… that kind of faith, if conditions are right, can grow into such a large tree that birds can build nests in it! All from a tiny seed! I wonder what tiny seeds are taking root in my heart that have the potential to grow into great.

**Day 94: Parable of yeast**

**Matt : 33; Luke 13: 20-21**

Guided reflection:

Now Jesus’ parable is from the kitchen. When I make bread, I mix together flour, sugar, salt, and yeast dissolved in water… and if I allow that little ball of dough to sit in a warm area for several hours – do nothing but let it be… it will rise to more than double its size! The Kingdom is like the yeast (or Leaven) that permeates all the dough and begins to transform and expand it. Do you see a pattern here in these parables? GOD does the expanding, the increasing, the developing… all we have to do is yield ourselves to God’s hands and GOD does the work in us! It is not all up to us! In our church’s budget, we have a line called “faith factor”… acknowledging that we plan on God doing more through and in us than we ourselves are capable of doing and being on our own! Faith is a thrill to see what God is going to do next! What in your life is going to take God to pull it off?

Guided prayer:

*“Transforming God, keep working in my heart and life. Help me to see that it is not all up to me… that you never planned on my doing great things for you on my own… you just want my heart to be willing to be a part of the adventure of faith! What is next for me, O Lord? Melt me, mold me, fill me, and use me. Amen”*

**Day 95: Why Jesus used parables**

**Matt 13: 34-35; Mark 4:33-34**

Guided reflection:

Jesus must have been a great story teller. It was even part of an ancient prophecy that the Messiah would speak in parables - not riddles of confusion, but stories of every day things to make a point.

Doing a children’s moment is like trying to create a parable. Look around you at this moment… your computer, iPod, date book, calendar, pencils… right now, select one item and consider how Christ might use that object to teach you a lesson.. Go ahead! (Then tell Pastor Charlie your good ones so he can use in a sermon one day!)

Guided prayer:

*“Patient teacher, open my eyes to see your insights and lessons all around me. Help me to keep it simple instead of trying to make the truth of your love for me something complicated. Don’t give up on me! Amen.”*