

Gospel and Sermon Transcript -4th Sunday After Pentecost - July 6, 2025

So I'm just kind of sizing up the group here to see what kind of shape you're in to begin with.

It is warm in here, and often when that happens, we play by summer rules.

So that means that if you're used to certain conventions of standing at certain parts of the service,

definitely optional.

I think there is water on hand in the refrigerator, no?

[INAUDIBLE]

OK, so the other thing that will happen is I'm suggesting we don't move around a lot, a lot,

because that just generates heat.

So if you want to be more still than usual, that's good.

The sermon will be shorter.

And I think the hymns later in the service, we will take out some verses of those because guess what?

Your body temp goes up when you're projecting and singing.

And maybe that's another intervention we can do for today.

We are glad you're here.

We welcome you.

And we certainly welcome those who are with us who will be watching the service as it is taped and then replayed in this time zone,

as they used to say on TV.

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 10th chapter.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

After this, the Lord appointed 70 others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go.

And Jesus said to them, the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.

Go on your way.

And see, I'm sending you out like lambs before wolves, carrying no purse, no bag, no sandals, and greet no one on the road.

Whatever house you enter first, say, peace to this house.

And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person.

But if not, it will return to you.

Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide for the laborer deserves to be paid.

Do not move about from house to house.

Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is said before you.

Cure the sick who are there and say to them, the kingdom of God has come near you.

But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say,

even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you.

Yet, yet know this, the kingdom of God has come near.

Whoever listens to you listens to me.

Whoever rejects you rejects me.

And whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me.

The seventy returned with joy saying, Lord, in your name even the demons submitted to us.

In Jesus said to them, I watch Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning.

See, what I have given you is authority to tread on snakes and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy.

And nothing will hurt you.

Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the Spirit submit to you.

But rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

The gospel of our Lord.

The Sermon

Now, I see we have a few members of our council here.

So if you had a nickel for every time you have heard me say, knowing why means knowing how,

you would have a few nickels to rub together.

It's not like a swept jar exactly.

It is sort of like a Bart says this a lot jar.

And that's what's happening in today's gospel is that Jesus has a very compelling and powerful why we do what we do.

And some of the instructions you heard like don't carry a lot of baggage and when you go to somebody's house,

see what's before you, that's sort of the how.

But the intertwine you see because the how is the living out of the why.

And I'll give you one quick example.

That line about when you go to somebody's house,
keep your eye out for the next better opportunity and go there instead.

You stay where you're invited.

The idea being that in a world like Jesus, parenthetically a world like ours,
things tend to be somewhat transactional, don't they?

So in Jesus' day, if you were invited to a house of somebody with high status,
reflected nicely on you, if you had a guest of high status, also reflected nicely on you.

So Jesus in effect is saying that this whole social climbing scheme that we like so much,

well, that's really not part of the rule and realm of God.

In fact, Jesus in speaking about this realm of God coming into our midst.

Oh, he's asking for trouble.

These are dangerous words.

I mean, can you imagine Caesar, who said that he was worshipped as Lord,
that he was the ruler of a whole empire.

He overhears this kingdom of God stuff from Jesus.

He's not going to exactly say, oh, well, that's nice.

He's just meaning that metaphorically.

Yeah, we're fine.

He takes that as a great threat, Caesar does.

And yet Jesus in a nonviolent way,

insists that the rule and realm of God does not operate anything like the schemes

of the powers that be.

Oh, I don't know.

I'm just making this up now.

I mean, it couldn't really happen anywhere that people who are obscenely wealthy, get more wealthy while kids don't get school lunch anymore.

I just made that up.

No, I didn't.

Oh, yeah.

Stuff like that is happening on a regular basis,
not only in that charming little country south of us,
but other places as well.

Anytime there's an opportunity for power to accentuate itself,
it's always at the expense of someone or something else.

Now I'm going to throw the book at you,
because this rule and realm of God is outlined actually by Jesus when he speaks,
and I love it that in Luke, it's on a level playing field.

He speaks to the people and he says,

"Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

Blessed are you who are hungry now, you will be filled."

These are not the people who usually are affirmed and blessed and reminded that God loves them.

Usually these are the people who were blamed for being poor, blamed for being hungry.

And Jesus says, "No, these are the people that God blesses."

Now for those of us who are a little cranky this morning, the woes are kind of fun to read.

And according to the Bart Revised Version of the Bible,

"WOE" can also be translated as "WHOA."

Whoa, look out, beware.

Actually, that is a fairly close interpretation of the word

"beware you who are rich, you've received yours, your consolation.

Woe to you who are full now, you will be hungry.

Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep."

Jesus must listen to his mother saying,

"You remember what she sings when the angel announces Jesus' birth?

That the mighty will be cast down, that the poor will be remembered,

and they will be filled with good things."

Here we are.

Once again, the rule and the realm of God as sung by Mary, as foretold by the prophets,

and now embodied by Jesus and the people he sends.

And this rule and realm of God, this thing that we think,

"Oh, well, if we're nice, maybe God will punch our ticket, we'll get into this paradise."

Well, true.

Jesus invites us to be where he is.

But the rule and the realm of God is not this thing we get into,
it's this thing that gets into us.

Catechism flashback for some.

When we pray the Lord's prayer, we are praying that those realities become true for us.

That's what that prayer is about.

And by just an amazing coincidence, we'll be praying that today.

The rule and the realm of God, according to a delightful book that I commend to you,

by Walter Brueggemann and others, is called "An Other Kingdom."

Speaking of the contrast between the way things are and the way things God wishes they would be,

and it hinges on the two things being neighbourliness, taking care of our neighbour,

and covenant, which is way different than contract.

Covenant is a mutual commitment to the common good.

That sounds like a decent definition, a working definition of the rule and the realm of God, doesn't it?

It is what we are called to in our baptism when we say that we will proclaim Christ in word and deed,

and that we will care for the world that God made.

But we can go farther back.

Oh Jesus, what is the greatest commandment to love your God with all that you are

and love your neighbor as yourself?

That is the greatest commandment, and it's also the rule and realm of God, part and parcel.

And so when we pray later, your kingdom come, or if you like your kin come, your will be done.

May our amen be both heartily spoken and faithfully lived.

Amen.

[Music]

[Music]