

Gospel and Sermon Transcript - 9th Sunday After Pentecost - July 26, 2026

00:00

Glad you're here. It's good to see you. It's sort of fun to see the summer prints

00:05

that people wear too and the summer logos of course.

00:12

So that was an ad lib that probably could have just been in my head not

00:20

spoken aloud, right?

00:31

It was nicer in there anyway. As we gather today, we will be commemorating Emancipation Sunday, which is something the Anglican Church has been doing for quite some time, and now many of our ELCIC congregations are joining in.

00:49

you likely know this history very well that it was in 1834 that the British Empire did away with

00:59

slavery and that included Canada and territories in the Caribbean. And so today's prayers will be

01:07

drawn from the Anglican Church Canada. You will hear that in the communion part of the service

01:13

today. We have a guest preacher who's not here. There is a sermon series that

01:22

comes from our denomination that is provided to us by a number of leaders in

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the National Church and the Synod. So today's sermon comes from Pastor

01:34

Christine Morrill-Wolf and the reason that I choose to read these periodically,

01:41

I think it's good for us to have different perspectives on the gospel.

01:47

I mean, I can give you the old white guy perspective, but there are other perspectives out there,

01:52

so I look for those and would like to offer those from time to time, particularly now

01:57

as we go summer and even into early autumn.

02:26

[MUSIC PLAYING]

02:30

[Music]

02:37

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

02:41

Glory to you, oh Lord.

02:45

"Jesus put before the crowds another parable."

02:50

The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed

02:54

that someone took and sowed in his field.

02:57

It is the smallest of the seeds, but when it has grown, it is the greatest of shrubs

03:03

and becomes like a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

03:11

He told them another parable.

03:14

The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures

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of flour until all was leavened.

03:24

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which a man found and reburied.

03:31

Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

03:38

Again the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls.

03:44

On finding one pearl of great value he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

03:52

Then the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of

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every kind, and when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into

04:05

baskets but throughout the bat.

04:08

So it will be at the end of the age.

04:11

The angels will come out and separate evil from the righteous, and throw them into the

04:17

furnace of fire where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Have you

04:24

understood all this? They answered yes and Jesus said to them, "Therefore every

scribe

04:32

who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like the master of the

04:36

household who brings out his treasure what is new and what is old." The gospel

04:44

of our Lord.

04:47

Won't you be seated.

The Sermon

05:04

As I read this sermon from Pastor Kristi Murrow-Wolf, she is the assistant to the bishop in the

05:11

Eastern Synod.

05:12

I can extend greetings from them as well.

05:21

From the preacher, she says,

05:24

this past school year, I spent a fair bit of time

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at the kitchen table with my daughter,

05:29

wrestling with middle school math.

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A leap in the learning curriculum this grade year

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made some concepts more challenging for her.

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So we would find ourselves trying to figure it out together.

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When she was learning, I learned a generation ago or so,

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the method was different, even if we were

05:52

working to the same answer.

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There was a lot of, that's not how we learned it, mom.

05:59

And usually, in her showing me how and what

06:02

she learned in class, it would click for her

06:06

at the quiet hush of the kitchen table

06:08

in a way she hadn't been able to grasp in the busyness of the classroom earlier that day.

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To be honest, there were tears of frustration for both of us. I cherish this time with her,

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and what I hope she remembers is not the math help she might have received, because honestly,

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that's truly forgettable and there's a reason I studied theology and math is

06:38

not it. But what I hope she remembers is the time we spent together. The formulas

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may fade and the worksheets may be recycled and the test scores won't

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matter so much anymore. But what I hope she remembers is the time that we sat

06:56

and faced a challenge together. I hope she remembers that when something felt

07:04

confusing she wasn't alone. I hope she remembers that someone showed up for her.

07:12

That there was laughter mixed in with the frustration. That there was patience

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on some days and grace on the harder days. That there was a place at the table

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for her questions and curiosities. Jesus says the kingdom of heaven is like a

07:32

mustard seed, like yeast hidden in flour, like treasure buried in a field, like a

07:39

pearl of great value. God's kingdom doesn't always arrive in dramatic

07:46

moments. Sometimes it's hidden in the ordinary. Tuesday evenings and math

07:52

homework spread across a kitchen table. The Kingdom of Heaven looks like people

07:59

showing up for each other again and again, even when the task itself was

08:04

rather forgettable. In this case, the treasure wasn't really the math. The

08:11

treasure was the relationship. Jesus keeps talking about the Kingdom of Heaven,

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but not in ways that are obvious or easy to grasp. There are no grand thrones here,

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no mighty armies, no clear lines of power. Instead, we get seeds, yeast, treasure

08:38

buried in a field, a merchant searching for pearls, a net scooping up all kinds

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of fish. It feels almost underwhelming. And yet when we listen closely, there is

08:56

something quietly radical unfolding in these stories. Jesus is shaping our

09:02

expectations not just of God's kingdom, but where and how we encounter the holy.

09:10

The kingdom of heaven, he says, is like a mustard seed, tiny, easily overlooked.

09:18

In fact, mustard was considered more of a nuisance plant than any kind of noble crop.

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It spreads wildly, unpredictably, taking over gardens and fields.

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This is not the image of orderly growth or controlled expansion.

09:36

It's in fact messy, subversive, and yet from this small unruly beginning comes

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shelter branches where birds can rest, where life can flourish. The kingdom then

09:53

is not about dominance, it's about unexpected belonging. Then Jesus moves to

10:02

yeast, another strange image, yeast is hidden, mixed into flour, invisible to the

10:09

eye, and yet it transforms everything it touches quietly, gradually, irreversibly.

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The kingdom of heaven is not always loud or obvious. It works beneath the surface,

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In conversations, in acts of compassion, in the slow work of justice, in the healing of

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relationships, and in the courage to begin again. It's the kind of

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transformation that doesn't make headlines but changes lives. And then

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treasure. A person stumbles upon something hidden in a field and filled

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with joy gives everything to claim it. A merchant finds a pearl of great value and does the

11:00

same. There's something here about recognition, about seeing what truly matters, like realizing

11:08

it's not always finding the right math answer at the kitchen table, but it's the relationship

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that's deepened by working through the hard things together. In a world that tells us

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what is valuable success wealth status control these parables invite us to

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reorient our hearts the kingdom is not something we earn or achieve or solve

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it is something we discover with curiosity and joy and when we do it has

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the potential to reshape everything. Jesus sends his kingdom snapshots with

11:52

the image of a net cast wide into the sea gathering all kinds of fish without

12:00

distinction, without pre-sorting, without exclusion. The sorting comes later and if

12:07

we read this through the lens of grace we remember that God's justice is not

12:14

about punishment. It's about restoration and truth telling and making things

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right. Not on our terms but always on God's terms. And here's the thing, it's

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not up to us to do the sorting. Our call and what God is asking us to do is

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simply cast the net wide. That's it. And by casting the net wide we create

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communities where all are welcomed, where diversity is not feared but

12:46

celebrated, where questions are honored and where healing becomes possible.

12:52

Because the kingdom of heaven is not a gated community, it is never expanding

12:58

table. Perhaps a table covered in middle school math homework where God comes to

13:04

us in a new untraditional way, in a way that reinforces that we are loved, not

13:13

because of what we do, but because of who God is. For us, this means that God

13:21

continues to reveal God's self to us in a world that is... I'm going to reread her

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line to do it proper justice here. Sorry about that. For us, this means God continues to reveal God's

13:37

self to us and the world in sometimes small and unassuming ways by the quiet acts of kindness,

13:48

the moments of connection and relationship. In the small seeds we plant that we trust will grow. In

13:59

in our communities and in the world. We are called then to stay open to the

14:07

delightful surprise of God and the possibility that the kingdom of heaven

14:12

might show up in places we least expect at the kitchen table in a difficult

14:18

conversation, in the courage to forgive, in the decision to begin again. It means

14:25

that God calls us to hold loosely what the world tells us is valuable and to

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lean more deeply into what gives life. And that means we cast our nets wide

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because the kingdom of heaven is not about scarcity or exclusion. It's not

14:46

about getting it all right, it's about grace. It's about grace that shows and

14:52

grows like a weed offering shelter to more life than we can know. Grace that

15:00

rises like bread to then be broken to feed the world. Grace that is hidden in

15:06

plain sight waiting to be discovered and shared. Grace in middle school math and

15:13

the connection formed when wading through the hard together. You see the

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kingdom of heaven is already among us in you, in me, in the communities we call

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home. I pray that we may have the eyes to see it, the hearts to trust it, and the

15:36

courage to live it.

15:42

Again, we are thankful for the words from Pastor Christine Morrill Wolf on this

15:47

day and to them we say Amen