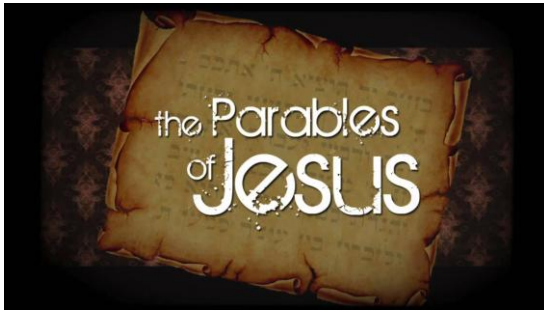


LOOKING AT LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPEL



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**SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN
ORDINARY TIME**

19th July 2026

Matt. 13:24 Jesus put another parable before the crowds: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵ but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. ²⁶ So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. ²⁷ And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?’ ²⁸ He answered, ‘An enemy has done this. ’The slaves said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ ²⁹ But he replied, ‘No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. ³⁰ Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’”

Matt. 13:31 He put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; ³² 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.”

Matt. 13:33 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.”

Matt. 13:34 Jesus told the crowds all these things in parables; without a parable he told them nothing. ³⁵ This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet:

I will open my mouth to speak in parables;

I will proclaim what has been hidden from the foundation of the world.”

Matt. 13:36 Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” ³⁷ He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; ³⁸ the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, ³⁹ and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰ Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, ⁴² and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!

We have parables again this Sunday, no less than three and they are all about growth but each from a different perspective. If we still think of the kingdom of God as referring to the afterlife then reflecting on these short stories will help us to think differently.

The first parable of the weeds tells an unusual story of someone trying to sabotage a good harvest; the second focuses on the tiny mustard seed and the change it undergoes, while the third moves away from farming to the kitchen and the importance of a little yeast in making the bread rise.

Each these parables presents important points for reflection about the ways of God in the world. The first one challenges us to recognise that sometimes we must learn to live with certain situations we don't like because the effort to remove or change them would do more harm than good. In the second we are asked to remember that God often works in small and apparently insignificant ways to bring about great change. Finally, the yeast is fixed right though the flour and is no longer identifiable but it is there and it works, so too the ways of God are mixed in through all the daily experiences and can achieve their results without us knowing how.

SEAN GOAN- Let the Reader Understand

POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. The owner of the field who allowed the wheat and the darnel to grow together is a reminder to us to be patient with ourselves and with others when we see everything is not right. Sometimes a preoccupation with the negative (the darnel) can blind us to seeing the positive in our own lives and in the lives of others. When have you found that a willingness to live with the messiness of the present created the conditions for future growth?
2. Have you ever found that it was through accepting the darnel that you learned important lessons for life, e.g., learning by making mistakes, or asking stupid questions, or taking foolish risks?
3. The parables of the mustard seed and the leaven are reminders that seemingly insignificant things can have very positive results. Have you ever been surprised by the benefit to yourself or others of a kind gesture, a small initiative, or a word of encouragement?

JOHN BYRNE OSA - Intercom

Jesus repeated it over and over again: God is here trying to change the world. His kingdom is coming. It was not easy to believe Jesus. The people were waiting for something more spectacular. Where are the “signs from heaven” of which the apocalyptic writers speak? Where can you see the power of God come down on the wicked?

Jesus had to teach them to perceive his presence in a different form. He still remembered the scene that he had seen in the patio of his house. His mother and the other women would arise early on the eve of the Sabbath to prepare bread for the whole week. It suggested to Jesus the motherly work of God in placing his leaven in the world.

The kingdom of God comes about like the leaven that a woman ‘hides’ in the dough so that the whole mass gets fermented. That’s how God acts. He does not come from the outside to impose his power like the emperor of Rome, but to transform human life from within in a silent and hidden manner.

This is the way God is: he does not impose, but transforms; does not dominate but attracts. This, those who work with him in his project must act like leaven by bringing in his truth, his justice and his love in a humble way, but with transforming power.

As followers of Jesus we cannot present ourselves in this society as outsiders trying to impose ourselves and dominate and control those who do not think like us. That is not how to open the way to the kingdom of God. We must become part of society, sharing the uncertainties, crises and contradictions of today’s world, and contributing to it our lives transformed by the gospel.

We must learn to live our lives as a minority of faithful witnesses to Jesus. What the church needs is not more social or political power, but more humility to allow ourselves to be transformed by Jesus in order to be the ferment of a more human world.

JOSE A PAGOLA- Following in the Footsteps of Jesus

The first parable is the one about the wheat and the darnel with an interpretation in verses 36-43. This is one possible interpretation but feel free to let the parable lead you in other directions.

As always when reading a parable, be conscious of the perspective you are coming from. Are you identifying with the wheat that a planter allowed to grow although some enemy had sown darnel alongside it? With the man who had the trust to allow both to grow together? Or with the servants who wanted to pull up the darnel, even though they might pull up the wheat with it?

Be conscious also of whether the parable is

- bringing back memories from your past
- giving you an insight into what is happening to you now,
- or inviting you to trust in the future.

MICHEL DE VERTEUIL- Lectio Divina on the Sunday Gospels

The kingdom grows and spreads as it will, gradually and unpredictably. It expands outside of our judgement and our narrow ways of thinking. Society might like to separate people into categories, to judge who is valuable or not but Jesus is clear that this is not our place. This approach lines up with the peaceful principles of the Sermon of the Mount, where Jesus calls us not to judge, to be at peace with others, to love our enemies. There is good and bad and everything in between, in each of us, in society and in the Church. Fortunately, Jesus allows for growth and change. The smallest of seeds can grow into the most majestic of plants, far beyond our expectations.

Jesus tells the disciples he is ‘proclaiming what has been hidden’. What comes as a surprise in the arables you hear today? What new insights do they offer?

TRÍONA DOHERTY & JANE MELLETT - Go Deeper