

# Morning Prayer

## Proper 9, Pentecost 5

July 5, 2020

### Prelude

### Announcements

### Opening Hymn

Hymnal 404

*We will extol you, ever-bless'd Lord (Old 124th)*

1 We will ex - tol you, ev - er - bless - ed Lord; your ho - ly  
2 Age shall to age pass on the end - less song, tell - ing the  
3 You, Lord, are gra - cious, mer - ci - ful to all, close to your

Name for ev - er be a - dored; each day we live our  
won - ders which to you be - long, your might - y acts with  
chil - dren when on you they call; and slow to an - ger,

psalm to you we raise; you, God and King, are wor - thy of all  
joy and fear re - late; praise we your glo - ry while on you we  
mer - ci - ful and kind, in your com - pas - sion we your bless - ings

praise, great and un - search - a - ble in all your ways.  
 wait, glad in the know - ledge of your love so great.  
 find. We love you with our heart and strength and mind.

## Confession of Sin

*The Presider says*

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. *Philippians 1:2*

Dearly beloved, we have come together in the presence of Almighty God our heavenly Father, to set forth his praise, to hear his holy Word, and to ask, for ourselves and on behalf of others, those things that are necessary for our life and our salvation. And so that we may prepare ourselves in heart and mind to worship him, let us keep silence, and with penitent and obedient hearts confess our sins, that we may obtain forgiveness by God's infinite goodness and mercy.

*Silence is kept.*

*The People's Respondent, the Presider, and the People*

**God of all mercy,  
 we confess that we have sinned against you,  
 opposing your will in our lives.  
 We have denied your goodness in each other,  
 in ourselves, and in the world you have created.  
 We repent of the evil that enslaves us,  
 the evil we have done,  
 and the evil done on our behalf.  
 Forgive, restore, and strengthen us  
 through our Savior Jesus Christ,  
 that we may abide in your love  
 and serve only your will. Amen.**

*The Priest then says*

Almighty God have mercy on you, + forgive you all your sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

## **The Invitatory and Psalter**

*Presider* Lord, open our lips.

*People* **And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen. Alleluia.**

The mercy of the Lord is everlasting:  
**Come let us adore him.**

### **Venite: Psalm 95**

Come, let us sing to the Lord; \*

let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.

**Let us come before God's presence with thanksgiving \*  
and raise to the Lord a shout with psalms.**

For you are a great God, \*

you are great above all gods.

**In your hand are the caverns of the earth, \*  
and the heights of the hills are yours also.**

The sea is yours, for you made it, \*

and your hands have molded the dry land.

**Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, \*  
and kneel before the Lord our Maker.**

For you are our God,

and we are the people of your pasture and the sheep of your hand. \*

**Oh, that today we would hearken to your voice!**

**Let us listen today to God's voice.**

### **Psalm 45:11-18**

<sup>11</sup>“Hear, O daughter; consider and listen closely; \*

forget your people and your father's house.

<sup>12</sup>**The king will have pleasure in your beauty; \***

**he is your master; therefore do him honor.**

<sup>13</sup>The people of Tyre are here with a gift; \*

the rich among the people seek your favor.”

<sup>14</sup>**All glorious is the princess as she enters; \***

**her gown is cloth-of-gold.**

<sup>15</sup>In embroidered apparel she is brought to the king; \*

after her the bridesmaids follow in procession.  
**<sup>16</sup>With joy and gladness they are brought, \*  
and enter into the palace of the king.**  
<sup>17</sup>“In place of fathers, O king, you shall have sons; \*  
you shall make them princes over all the earth.  
**<sup>18</sup>I will make your name to be remembered  
from one generation to another; \*  
therefore nations will praise you for ever and ever.”**

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

## **The Lessons**

### **First Reading**

Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67

A Reading from the book of Genesis.

[The man said to Rebekah and her household,] <sup>34</sup>“I am Abraham’s servant. <sup>35</sup>The LORD has greatly blessed my master, and he has become wealthy; he has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female slaves, camels and donkeys. <sup>36</sup>And Sarah my master’s wife bore a son to my master when she was old; and he has given him all that he has. <sup>37</sup>My master made me swear, saying, ‘You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live; <sup>38</sup>but you shall go to my father’s house, to my kindred, and get a wife for my son.’

<sup>42</sup>“I came today to the spring, and said, ‘O LORD, the God of my master Abraham, if now you will only make successful the way I am going! <sup>43</sup>I am standing here by the spring of water; let the young woman who comes out to draw, to whom I shall say, “Please give me a little water from your jar to drink,” <sup>44</sup>and who will say to me, “Drink, and I will draw for your camels also”—let her be the woman whom the LORD has appointed for my master’s son.’

<sup>45</sup>“Before I had finished speaking in my heart, there was Rebekah, coming out with her water jar on her shoulder; and she went down to the spring, and drew. I said to her, ‘Please let me drink.’ <sup>46</sup>She quickly let down her jar from her shoulder, and said, ‘Drink, and I will also water your camels.’ So I drank, and she also watered the camels. <sup>47</sup>Then I asked her, ‘Whose daughter are you?’ She said, ‘The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor’s son, whom Milcah bore to him.’ So I put the ring on her nose, and the bracelets on her arms. <sup>48</sup>Then I bowed my head and worshiped the LORD, and blessed the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me by the right way to obtain the daughter of my master’s kinsman for his son. <sup>49</sup>Now then, if you will deal loyally and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so that I may turn either to the right hand or to the left.”

<sup>58</sup>And they called Rebekah, and said to her, “Will you go with this man?” She said, “I will.” <sup>59</sup>So they sent away their sister Rebekah and her nurse along with Abraham’s servant and his men. <sup>60</sup>And they blessed Rebekah and said to her,  
“May you, our sister, become thousands of myriads;

may your offspring gain possession of the gates of their foes.”

<sup>61</sup>Then Rebekah and her maids rose up, mounted the camels, and followed the man; thus the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.

<sup>62</sup>Now Isaac had come from Beer-lahai-roi, and was settled in the Negeb. <sup>63</sup>Isaac went out in the evening to walk in the field; and looking up, he saw camels coming. <sup>64</sup>And Rebekah looked up, and when she saw Isaac, she slipped quickly from the camel, <sup>65</sup>and said to the servant, “Who is the man over there, walking in the field to meet us?” The servant said, “It is my master.” So she took her veil and covered herself. <sup>66</sup>And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. <sup>67</sup>Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah’s tent. He took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death.

*Reader*            The Word of the Lord.  
*People*            **Thanks be to God.**

### **Canticle Q: A Song of Christ’s Goodness**

*The Reader, the People’s Respondent, and the People*

Jesus, as a mother you gather your people to you; \*

you are gentle with us as a mother with her children.

**Often you weep over our sins and our pride, \***

**tenderly you draw us from hatred and judgment.**

You comfort us in sorrow and bind up our wounds, \*

in sickness you nurse us and with pure milk you feed us.

**Jesus, by your dying, we are born to new life; \***

**by your anguish and labor we come forth in joy.**

Despair turns to hope through your sweet goodness; \*

through your gentleness, we find comfort in fear.

**Your warmth gives life to the dead, \***

**your touch makes sinners righteous.**

Lord Jesus, in your mercy, heal us; \*

in your love and tenderness, remake us.

**In your compassion, bring grace and forgiveness, \***

**for the beauty of heaven, may your love prepare us.**

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

### **Second Reading**

Romans 7:15-25a

A Reading from Paul’s letter to the Romans.

<sup>15</sup>I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. <sup>16</sup>Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. <sup>17</sup>But in fact it is no longer I

that do it, but sin that dwells within me. <sup>18</sup>For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. <sup>19</sup>For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. <sup>20</sup>Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.

<sup>21</sup>So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. <sup>22</sup>For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, <sup>23</sup>but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. <sup>24</sup>Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? <sup>25a</sup>Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

*Reader*           The Word of the Lord.  
*People*            **Thanks be to God.**

**Hymn**  
*Just as I am*

LEVAS 137

1. Just as I am, without one plea, But  
2. Just as I am, though tossed about With  
5. Just as I am, thy love unknown Has  
6. Just as I am, of thy great love The

1. that thy blood was shed for me,  
2. many-a conflict, many-a doubt;  
5. broken every barrier down;  
6. breadth, length, depth, and height to prove,

1. And that thou bidd'st me come to thee, O  
 2. Fight - ings and fears with - in, with - out, O  
 5. Now to be thine, yea, thine a - lone, O  
 6. Here for a sea - son, then a - bove: O

Lamb of God, I come, I come.

**Third Reading**

Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

A Reading from Matthew.

[Jesus said,] <sup>16</sup>“To what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another,

<sup>17</sup>“We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.”

<sup>18</sup>For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon’; <sup>19</sup>the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”

<sup>25</sup>At that time Jesus said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; <sup>26</sup>yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. <sup>27</sup>All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

<sup>28</sup>“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup>Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup>For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”



*Reader* The Word of the Lord.  
*People* **Thanks be to God.**

## Sermon

### The Apostles' Creed

*The People's Respondent, the Presider, and the People*

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth;  
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.  
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.  
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins  
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

### The Prayers

*Presider* The Lord be with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

*Presider* Let us pray.

*The People's Respondent, the Presider, and the People*

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.**

V. Show us your mercy, O Lord;

**R. And grant us your salvation.**

V. Clothe your ministers with righteousness;

**R. Let your people sing with joy.**  
V. Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;  
**R. For only in you can we live in safety.**  
V. Lord, keep this nation under your care;  
**R. And guide us in the way of justice and truth.**  
V. Let your way be known upon earth;  
**R. Your saving health among all nations.**  
V. Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;  
**R. Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.**  
V. Create in us clean hearts, O God;  
**R. And sustain us with your Holy Spirit.**

### *The Collect of the Day*

Almighty God, you have built your Church upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone: Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their teaching, that we may be made a holy temple acceptable to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### *A Collect for Sundays*

O God, you make us glad with the weekly remembrance of the glorious resurrection of your Son our Lord: Give us this day such blessing through our worship of you, that the week to come may be spent in your favor; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### *A Collect for Peace*

O God, the author of peace and lover of concord, to know you is eternal life and to serve you is perfect freedom: Defend us, your humble servants, in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in your defense, may not fear the power of any adversaries; through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### *A Prayer for Mission*

O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you; bring the nations into your fold; pour out your Spirit upon all flesh; and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **Intercessions and thanksgivings**

*Presider* Let us come before God in a posture of openness, expecting the Holy Spirit to transform our lives and to lead us into the offering of our prayers, as we respond, "Hear us, good Lord."

*Intercessor* Free us from the bondage of our sinful ways, our blindness to truth, our stubbornness and lack of discipline, that we may yearn after the fruits of the divine Word and follow its wisdom; let us pray. **Hear us, good Lord.**

*Silence is kept.*

Strengthen the love and devotion amongst family members, that forgiveness may heal old wounds, and mutual affection pave the way to wholeness; let us pray. **Hear us, good Lord.**

*Silence is kept.*

Guide the leaders of our Church, that there may be mutual respect across, and a renewed sense of partnership in bringing God's dream for the world into the most forgotten corners of our neighborhoods and nations; let us pray. **Hear us, good Lord.**

*Silence is kept.*

Encourage our civic leaders to modify their convictions with compromise, that there may be a renewal of hope for those who live in poverty, unemployment, and lack of educational opportunities; let us pray. **Hear us, good Lord.**

*Silence is kept.*

Reveal the unfolding beauty of creation, the uniqueness of seasons, and the joy and wonder of your handicraft, that we may delight in guarding these gifts; let us pray. **Hear us, good Lord.**

*Silence is kept.*

Receive [\_\_\_\_\_, and] all those who have died into your arms of mercy, that they may sleep in everlasting peace; let us pray. **Hear us, good Lord.**

*Silence is kept.*

Faithfully seeking the path to new life, we continue our prayers, remembering before you our Bishops Bonnie, Michael, Justin, Julio, Moises, Elizabeth, Donald and Craig. We pray for all ministers, priests, deacons, ministry teams and those in formation; and our brothers and sisters worshipping at St John's, Westland; and St Timothy's, Nizao, in the Dominican Republic. We give you thanks for all the blessings and mercies we have received [especially \_\_\_\_\_]. We pray for those who are sick, or in any distress or trouble [especially \_\_\_\_\_].

*Silence is kept.*

Lord God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage,

not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; for this we pray. **Hear us, good Lord.**

*Priest* In union, O Lord with the faithful at every altar of your Church, where the Holy Eucharist is now being celebrated, we desire to offer our praise and thanksgiving. We present to you our souls and bodies with the earnest wish that we may always be united to you. And since we cannot now receive you sacramentally, we beseech you to come spiritually into our hearts. We unite ourselves to you, and embrace you with all the affections of our souls. Let nothing ever separate us from you. **Amen.**

### **Prayers for those celebrating their birthdays and anniversaries**

*In July, we celebrate the birthdays of Linda, Amy, Drake, Grace, Scott, Nannette, Joe, Tim, and any others you wish to remember in prayer.*

*Prayer for a Birthday*

BCP p.830

O God, our times are in your hand: Look with favor, we pray, on your servants Linda, Amy, Drake, Grace, Scott, Nannette, Joe, and Tim, as they begin another year. Grant that they may grow in wisdom and grace, and strengthen their trust in your goodness all the days of their lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*Today we celebrate the anniversaries of those you wish to remember in prayer.*

*Prayer for an Anniversary*

BCP p.429

Eternal God, creator and preserver of all life, author of salvation, and giver of all grace: Look with favor upon the world you have made, and for which your Son gave his life, and especially upon *this/ese* couple/s. Grant that their wills may be so knit together in your will, and their spirits in your Spirit, that they may continue to grow in love and peace with you and one another all the days of their lives. **Amen.**

*The Presider then says*

My sisters and brothers, I invite you- wherever you are- to take into your hands the gifts you offer today. Gifts of food, gifts of money, gifts of whatever form, and join me as we offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and make good our vows to the Most High.

Let us pray.

Loving God and merciful Creator, whose hand is open wide to satisfy the needs of every living creature: we come to you with thanksgiving and praise. We offer to you this day our gifts of time, talent, and possessions, knowing that all we are, and all we have, is a gift from you. Please accept these gifts, and help us to reach out to others as you, our God, have reached out to us. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## A Prayer of St. Chrysostom

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: **Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. Amen.**

## Closing Hymn

Hymnal 579

*Almighty Father, strong to save*

1 Al - might - y Fa - ther, strong to save, whose arm hath bound the  
2 O Christ, the Lord of hill and plain o'er which our traf - fic  
3 O Spi - rit, whom the Fa - ther sent to spread a - broad the  
4 O Trin - i - ty of love and power, our peo - ple shield in

rest - less wave, who bidd'st the might - y o - cean deep its  
runs a - main by moun - tain pass or val - ley low; wher -  
firm - a - ment; O Wind of hea - ven, by thy might save  
dan - ger's hour; from rock and tem - pest, fire and foe, pro -

own ap - point - ed li - mits keep: O hear us when we  
ev - er, Lord, thy peo - ple go, pro - tect them by thy  
all who dare the ea - gle's flight, and keep them by thy  
tect them where - so - e'er they go; thus ev - er - more shall

cry to thee for those in per - il on the sea.  
 guard - ing hand from ev - ery per - il on the land.  
 watch - ful care from ev - ery per - il in the air.  
 rise to thee glad praise from space, air, land, and sea.

**Dismissal and Blessing**

*Priest* Go into the world, and know how much a tired and hurting world needs your strength and gladness. For there are deeds of compassion and courage that will never be done, unless you do them; and words of hope and healing that will never be spoken, unless you speak them.

And the blessing of God, † Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, be with you, now and forever.

**Amen.**

*Presider* Let us bless the Lord.  
*People* **Thanks be to God.**

*Presider* The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. **Amen.** *2 Corinthians 13:14*

**Postlude**

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**REGARDING OFFERINGS TO ST. BARNABAS CHURCH**

**To make your regular offering to St Barnabas,** please mail your check to the church: 20500 W Old US-12, Chelsea MI 48118-1309. Mail is being collected daily.

**If you wish to make an offering online,** you can use this link provided by the Diocese to do so securely: <https://www.edomi.org/give/> Contributions given here will be transferred by the diocesan Treasurer to St Barnabas.

## CONTINUING OUR DONATIONS OF FOOD AND FUNDS TO FAITH IN ACTION

Faith in Action is providing leadership in collecting donations to support households in need in the Chelsea and Dexter areas.

**Needed right now:** Pizza crust mix, pizza sauce, baking soda, sugar, chips; cleaning products, and personal products are always needed, as these items cannot be purchased with food stamps. **You may bring your donations to FIA**, or to Nancy who will see that they get there.

Donations to help us combat the continuing effects of the pandemic can be made by PayPal at [www.faithinaction1.org](http://www.faithinaction1.org), by [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/faithinaction1), or by mailing a check to *Faith in Action, 603 S. Main Street, Chelsea MI 48118*.

**If you need help, please call us at (734) 475-3305**

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### **Enrichment for Our Spiritual Journey**

**Join St Barnabas'** twice-weekly Zoom check-in! Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. Contact Bill or Marion if you need the link.

**Watch** Bishop Bonnie Perry's sermons, <https://www.edomi.org/whatsheaid/sermons/>

**Watch** Washington National Cathedral's live-streamed Eucharist and Daily Office services, <https://cathedral.org/calendar/>

**Join in** a short, weekly, meditation with Presiding Bishop Curry here: <https://episcopalchurch.org/habits-of-grace>

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### **Upcoming Commemorations**

- July 5 Eva Lee Matthews, Monastic, 1928;  
and, Jan Hus, Prophetic Witness and Martyr, 1415
- July 8 Priscilla and Aquila, Coworkers of the Apostle Paul
- 11 Benedict of Nursia, Monastic and Abbott of Monte Cassino, c.543

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**Concluding prayer** at the Intercessions adapted from *The Armed Forces Prayer Book*, 1951.

**Concluding hymn** being sung today by request of Jan Schubring; thank you, Jan.



## BIBLE STUDIES THAT WORK

### Scripture preparation for July 12, 2020: Pentecost 6, Proper 10A

#### Genesis 25:19-34; Psalm 119:105-112; Romans 8:1-11; Matthew 13:1-9,18-23

##### Genesis 25:19-34

This story from Genesis tells us of the early days of Jacob and his brother, Esau. The two were twins, born to their parents Rebekah and Isaac after many years of infertility. The two are seemingly at odds from the very beginning. Even before they are born, they are fighting over the space they have to share. And Rebekah, distraught, asks the Lord why this is so.

The Lord explains to her that “Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples born of you shall be divided.” Thus, from the very beginning, Jacob and Esau are seemingly set for conflict. Jacob takes advantage of his brother – not once, but twice – first tricking him out of his birthright and then out of his father’s blessing. This is Jacob - the father of Israel.

I think a lot about how God has set these two up in conflict and what it means. So often, we look at conflict as a negative thing. Winners and losers. That it is something to avoid or shy away from. There are definitely sides. And we see the winner is the stronger one. The right one. The one who is favored by God.

After Jacob takes his father’s blessing, he leaves his family, afraid of what might happen to him if his brother had the chance to retaliate. But if you know the story, you know that along Jacob’s journey, he has the opportunity for growth. He learns. He changes. He wrestles with those parts of himself that perhaps he wasn’t as comfortable with. And when he meets his brother Esau again, Jacob is humble. Esau greets him with words of compassion and mercy and love.

- We often focus on the rest of Jacob’s story without thinking through his early days. How do you reconcile Jacob’s actions here with the remainder of the story of Jacob?
- How do you approach conflict? In times of conflict, do you tend to shy away or look to understand how God may want you to grow?

##### Psalm 119:105-112

Psalm 119 is the longest psalm in the Bible. Throughout it, the psalmist exalts God’s word and laws, making clear the psalmist’s efforts to obey God’s laws and keep God’s commandments.

- The psalm uses “you” and “I” language as a conversation between the psalmist and God. Can you see yourself saying these words? If so, how do you measure up against the Psalmist? Which parts do you feel comfortable with and which parts might you still be working on?

## **Romans 8:1-11**

The opening line of this passage is “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

God may not condemn us, but most of us do a good enough job of it ourselves. Shame. Guilt. Blame. Many of us have a hard time accepting the type of free love that Paul talks about here in the Letter to the Romans. We measure our successes against others. We let negative thoughts and self-doubts in and allow them to control our inner narrative. We find it hard to love the bodies God has put us in.

Even when we don’t turn those voices towards ourselves, we readily apply those same filters to others – questioning whether they may be living the way God would want them to, mistakenly thinking that they should be recipients of God’s condemnation and that we are not.

- What place should shame, guilt, and blame have in our inner monologues when the Spirit of God resides in each of us? How can we remind ourselves that the Spirit of God resides not only in ourselves but also in each other?

## **Matthew 13: 1-9, 18-23**

“Let those who have ears, let them hear!” It’s a well-known phrase. In the New Revised Standard Version, the language is “Let anyone with ears listen.”

In today’s Gospel, Jesus is telling the crowd the Parable of the Sower, and throughout the text, the exhortation both to listen and to hear is repeated several times.

Jesus is talking to the assembled crowd. Wouldn’t they already be listening? Wouldn’t they be hanging on every word, hoping to learn from the teacher? It’s not the only place that Jesus repeats this plea, but this passage perhaps contains the most emphasis, as he tells the story of one who sows seeds liberally, some falling on good soil where they can grow heartily, while others are immediately picked off by the birds, and still others fall on rocky ground where, even if they sprout, they will wither.

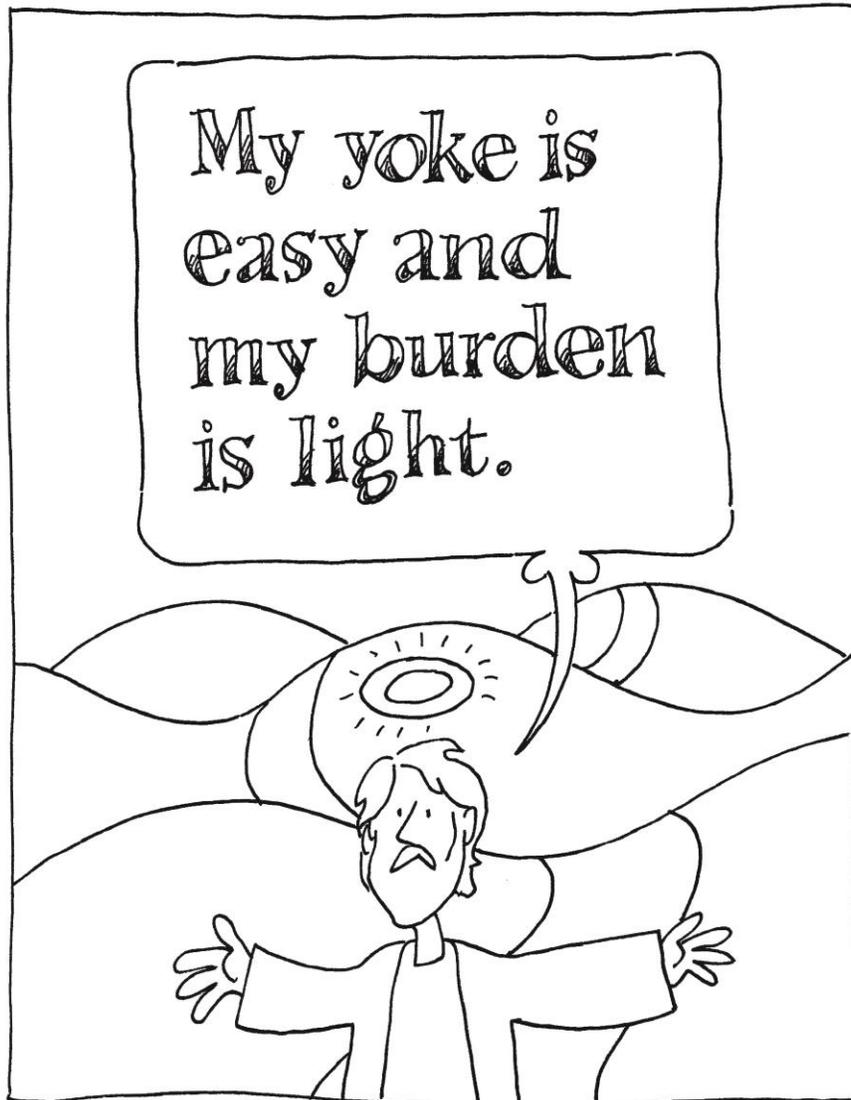
Jesus speaks in parables to help make his meaning plain, as he draws parallels between the situations of everyday life and the kingdom of God. Still, Jesus also knows that although we have ears, we often choose not to listen. It is easier to substitute our own meaning for what God is trying to tell us.

- In what ways might God be trying to make something plain to you that it may be easier to overlook? In your life, in what situations are you the fertile ground for the seeds’ spread versus the rocky ground?

*This Bible study was written by Marisa Sifontes.*

## Our Mission:

We seek to grow as diverse disciples of Jesus Christ, and to serve Jesus by serving others in the world, guided by the values of Ancient Rites, Open Minds, and Affirming Hearts.



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