



life giving
life affirming
life changing

The Virtual Messenger

July 14, 2020

for Sunday, July 19, 2020

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LATEST VIDEO

Check out Amanda's latest cooking video – chicken taco skillet: <https://youtu.be/iUxHr40bMK8>

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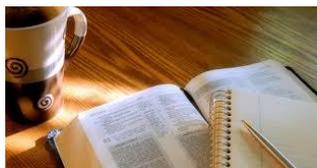
OPENING PRAYER

Creator God, unceasingly at work in the field of humanity sowing the good seed and awaiting its yield, let your Holy Spirit move in power over us to transform our hearts into the good soil you seek. Then, may your word bear fruit a hundredfold in our deeds of justice and peace, and thus reveal to a world that eagerly awaits its liberation the blessed hope and glorious freedom of your reign. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

Prayers for Sunday and Seasons, Year A, Peter J. Scagnelli, LTP, 1992

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BIBLE READING



The Sower – Mark 4: 1-9

Again he began to teach beside the sea. Such a very large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat on the sea and sat there, while the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land.

He began to teach them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them:

“Listen! A sower went out to sow.

And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and the birds came and ate it up.

Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up quickly, since it had no depth of soil.

And when the sun rose, it was scorched; and since it had no root, it withered away.

Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain.

Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.”

And he said, “Let anyone with ears to hear listen!”

Holy Word, Holy Wisdom
Thanks be to God.

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LETTER FROM JON



Hello Everyone:

The Parable of the Sower

First off, let's deal with the Christian jargon. Sower is not a word we use often in our lives. It means to scatter, especially seeds over the ground for growing. It means to strew about, to distribute, often half hazardedly. It can also refer to propagation, dissemination, especially of rumours. When I asked a friend this question, they mentioned "sowing one's (wild) oats"... we will leave that connotation, for another day!

In the parable we have heard in Mark Chapter 4 today, The Sower is God. I've heard it said that, "God spreads seeds around like a 4 year old spreads Peanut Butter - they get it everywhere!" But this story is not actually about God, the sower, or even about the seed. I want to propose, that it is actually about

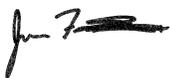
you, and your ability to hear the Good News, receive it, and do something amazing with it, in this world that we live in.

Remember, the Good News of God begins with Creation. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. It moves, pretty quickly, to the fall of creation, and the broken relationships that taint our very existence. The Good News is also about the call of repentance, and making ourselves into better human beings, with God's grace. God's greatest desire is to save us from our selves. To remind us that the Kingdom of God is not just at the end of times but here, now, on earth, as it is in heaven.

In the parable of the sower, the Word of God, is code for Jesus. The word is the seed. But remember, the parable is not about the sower, or the seed. It's about you. You are the one who hears the parable. You are the one who hears the Good News of Jesus Christ. Will you hear it with open ears? Can you listen to what God is saying to you in the depths of your heart, in the deepest part of your being? Will the soil that receives the seed from the sower be hardened, or rocky, or thorny? I pray that it not be so For the Parable of the Sower is all about how you respond to the Gospel. Will you respond in quantity or quality? God wants the best from you, regardless of what you can give.

The Gospel is always in danger of being lost in our lives. The paradox of the parable, the truth of the matter, is that God scatters with great abandon, knowing that the seed of the Gospel will fall where it will. The humans that God created have the free will to receive that knowledge of Jesus Christ, or not. The Good News for you is that God delights in those who respond 100% to its call for justice and mercy in the world. Bearing fruit to return to God, in appreciation for the life you live, the struggles you overcome, the healing you bring about, and the joy you feel, in bringing about the Kingdom of God here on earth. Justice and Mercy for ourselves, our friends and family, our community, the whole world - that sounds like Good News to me!

Amen.



Rev. Jon Forbes

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PRAYERS FOR SUNDAY



Please see Friday's Eblast...

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HYMN



Lord, Let My Heart be Good Soil

[recorded by Choir]

Lord, let my heart be good soil,
open to the seed of your word.
Lord, let my heart be good soil,
where love can grow and peace is understood.
When my heart is hard, break the stone away.
When my heart is cold, warm it with the day.
When my heart is lost, lead me on your way.
Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart,
Lord, let my heart be good soil.

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Music: Mark Sedio
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