

Sunday, 23 July 2017
"He was called Jesus"

Reading 1: Wisdom 12:13, 16-19
Reading 2: Romans 8:26-27

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 86:5-6, 9-10, 15-16
Gospel : Matthew 13:24-43

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Another parable he put before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. And the servants of the householder came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then has it weeds?' He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' But he said, 'No; lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barns.'

Another parable he put before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all 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." He told them another parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened." All this Jesus said to the crowds in parables; indeed he said nothing to them without a parable. This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet: "I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world."

Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field." He answered, "He who sows the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world, and the good seed means the sons of the kingdom; the weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the close of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the close of the age. The Son of man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and throw them into the furnace of fire; there men will weep and gnash their teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

Meditation: What can malicious weed-sowing tell us about the kingdom of God? The image Jesus uses in this parable is a common everyday example of planting, harvesting, and sorting the good fruit from the bad. Weeds can spoil and even kill a good harvest if they are not separated and destroyed at the proper time. Uprooting them too early, though, can destroy the good plants in the process. Just as nature teaches us patience, so God's patience also teaches us to guard the seed of his "word" which he has planted in our hearts and to beware of the destructive force of sin and evil which can destroy it. God's word brings life, but Satan seeks to destroy the good seed which has been planted in the hearts of those who have heard God's word. God's judgment is not hasty, but it does come. And in the end, God will reward each according to what they have sown and reaped in this life. In that day God will separate the evil from the good.

What can mustard seeds and leaven teach us about the kingdom of God? The tiny mustard seed literally grew to be a tree which attracted numerous birds because they loved the little black mustard seed it produced. God's kingdom works in a similar fashion. It starts from the smallest beginnings in the hearts of men and women who are receptive to God's word. And it works unseen and causes a transformation from within. Leaven is another powerful agent of change. A lump of dough left to itself remains just what it is, a lump of dough. But when the leaven is added to it a transformation takes place which produces rich and wholesome bread when heated - the staple of life for humans. The kingdom of God produces a transformation in those who receive the new life which Jesus Christ offers. When we yield to Jesus Christ, our lives are transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.

Questions for Community Faith Sharing:

1. How good are you at listening, especially for the word of God and what makes you ineffective and unresponsive to God's Word?
2. Taking things for granted or lack of appreciation toward others are the root of the weeds that can destroy our good nature as children of God. How do you uproot these weeds?
3. As the children of God, we must always glorify the Lord in what we do. Do you constantly praise the Lord for your achievements?

"Lord Jesus, let your word take root in my heart and may your all-consuming love transform my life that I may sow what is good, worthy, and pleasing to you."