

MUMC At-Home Worship: February 28, 2021

We're continuing in worship this week with the Gospel of Mark as many in the congregation are making a Lenten practice out of reading the whole the gospel. Whether you've joined in these forty days of reading, have taken up any other Lenten practices, or have simply continued to practice your faith in your everyday living, I pray that this first week of Lent has begun the important work of preparing our hearts for Easter! Thanks for worshipping with us today. ~ *Pastor Dillon*

If available, place a candle in the center of your gathering space and light it with this prayer:

Lord, help us use this Lenten season to draw near to you. Strip away all that distracts us and open our eyes to see you anew. Refresh our weary hearts to beat with your love and compassion. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.

Hymn: *Wonderful Words of Life*, United Methodist Hymnal #600 [watch/listen here](#)

Scripture Reading: Mark 4:10-12, 30-34

The word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

Reflect:

1. Jesus' description of the listeners who don't hear in verse 12 is often seen as an allusion to Isaiah 6:9-10, when it seems that Isaiah is prepared for a people resistant to his message until they are so lost and forsaken that they are like a mighty tree cut down to a stump, which God calls "a holy seed" (Isaiah 6:13). Have you ever experienced a time of hardship or uncertainty becoming a place of growth?
2. While Jesus said that the disciples had been given "the secret of God's kingdom," they still struggled to understand Jesus' parables and needed them explained to them. Unlike those who see without realizing they don't understand, the disciples know how much they don't know. This would suggest that the secret of the kingdom of God is not necessarily the understanding of Jesus' teachings but Jesus himself, whom the disciples followed in search of ever deeper understanding. What might it look like for us today to hold close to Jesus as we continue wrestling with all we don't know?
3. Unlike fables, parables are not intended to have a single straightforward meaning. Looking at the parable Jesus teaches in verses 30-32, what is your first response about what it might mean? What might be some other interpretations? How might some or all of these interpretations work together to reveal Jesus' teaching?

Hymn: *Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore*, United Methodist Hymnal #344 [watch/listen here](#)

Prayer Requests: Share prayer requests and have a moment of silent prayer

Lord's Prayer

Hymn: *You Are the Seed*, United Methodist Hymnal #583 [watch/listen here](#)

Closing Prayer: Holy God, your teachings sometimes leave us confused like the parables puzzled Jesus' disciples. Open us to your explanations even as you invite us to make peace with the unknowns. May we never think we so much that we stop wrestling with your teachings. Amen.

(Blow out the candle)

Wonderful Words of Life
United Methodist Hymnal #600

1. Sing them over again to me,
wonderful words of life;
let me more of their beauty see,
wonderful words of life;
words of life and beauty
teach me faith and duty.

Refrain:

Beautiful words, wonderful words,
wonderful words of life;
Beautiful words, wonderful words,
wonderful words of life.

2. Christ, the blessed one, gives to all
wonderful words of life;
sinner, list to the loving call,
wonderful words of life;
all so freely given,
wooing us to heaven. [Refrain]
3. Sweetly echo the gospel call,
wonderful words of life;
offer pardon and peace to all,
wonderful words of life;
Jesus, only Savior,
sanctify forever. [Refrain]

“Wonderful Words of Life” words and music are by Philip P. Bliss, 1874 and both are in the public domain.

Mark 4:10-12 (CEB)

When they were alone, the people around Jesus, along with the Twelve, asked him about the parables. He said to them, “The secret of God’s kingdom has been given to you, but to those who are outside everything comes in parables. This is so that they can look and see but have no insight, and they can hear but not understand. Otherwise, they might turn their lives around and be forgiven.

Mark 4:30-34 (CEB)

He continued, “What’s a good image for God’s kingdom? What parable can I use to explain it? Consider a mustard seed. When scattered on the ground, it’s the smallest of all the seeds on the earth; but when it’s planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all vegetable plants. It produces such large branches that the birds in the sky are able to nest in its shade.”

With many such parables he continued to give them the word, as much as they were able to hear. He spoke to them only in parables, then explained everything to his disciples when he was alone with them.

Scripture quotations noted CEB are taken from the Common English Bible, copyright 2011. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore
United Methodist Hymnal #344

1. Lord, you have come to the lakeshore
looking neither for wealthy nor wise ones;
you only asked me to follow humbly.

Refrain:

O Lord, with your eyes you have searched
me,
and while smiling have spoken my name;
now my boat's left on the shoreline behind
me;
by your side I will seek other seas.

2. You know so well my possessions;
my boat carries no gold and no weapons;
you will find there my nets and labor.
[Refrain]
3. You need my hands, full of caring
through my labors to give others rest,
and constant love that keeps on loving.
[Refrain]
4. You, who have fished other oceans,
ever longed for by souls who are waiting,
my loving friend, as thus you call me.
[Refrain]

"Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore" words are by Cesareo Gabaraín, trans. by Gertrude C. Suppe, George Lockwood, and Raquel Gutiérrez-Achon; music is by Cesareo Gabaraín; harm. by Skinner Chávez-Melo, 1987. © 1979 Ediciones Paulinas; trans. © 1989 The United Methodist Publishing House; harm. © 1987 Skinner Chávez-Melo

You Are the Seed
United Methodist Hymnal #583

1. You are the seed that will grow a new
sprout; you're a star that will shine in the
night; you are the yeast and a small grain of
salt, a beacon to glow in the dark.
You are the dawn that will bring a new day;
you're the wheat that will bear golden grain;
you are a sting and a soft, gentle touch,
my witnesses where'er you go.

Refrain:

Go, my friends, go to the world, proclaiming
love to all, messengers of my forgiving
peace, eternal love.
Be, my friends, a loyal witness, from the
dead I arose; "Lo, I'll be with you forever,
till the end of the world."

2. You are the flame that will lighten the dark,
sending sparkles of hope, faith, and love;
you are the shepherds to lead the whole
world through valleys and pastures of peace.
You are the friends that I chose for myself,
the word that I want to proclaim.
You are the new kingdom built on a rock
where justice and truth always reign.
[Refrain]
3. You are the life that will nurture the plant;
you're the waves in a turbulent sea;
yesterday's yeast is beginning to rise,
a new loaf of bread it will yield.
There is no place for a city to hide,
nor a mountain can cover its might;
may your good deeds show a world in
despair a path that will lead all to God.
[Refrain]

"You Are the Seed" words are by Cesareo Gabaraín, 1979; trans. by Raquel Gutiérrez-Achon and Skinner Chávez-Melo; music is by Cesareo Gabaraín, 1979; harm. by Skinner Chávez-Melo, 1987. © 1979 Ediciones Paulinas; trans. © 1989 The United Methodist Publishing House; harm. © 1987 Skinner Chávez-Melo