

DEVOTION for PENTECOST 3

Psalm 1

**Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked
or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.**

But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night.

**He is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.**

Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away.

Therefore, the wicked will not stand in the judgement, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen

2 Corinthians 5:1-21

Christ reconciled us to God

What do the images of an earthly tent and a heavenly dwelling show us?

What is the most essential part of the gospel ministry?

Christ reconciled us to God. How do we personally access this reconciliation?

Mark 4:1-34

Parables of Growth

What causes growth?

What hinders growth?

How can we ensure the seed grows in our lives?

“GOD’S KINGDOM GROWS”

“The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground.”

The kingdom of God is to have relationship of peace with the heavenly Father. We enter into a peaceful relationship with the heavenly Father, through faith in Christ the Saviour. Faith is a gift seeded by human agency, through the proclaiming of the gospel. It is germinated, given growth and brought to a harvest of eternal life by the Holy Spirit. Jesus often spoke about the kingdom of God in terms of seed sown, plants growing and grain harvested. Some say he used these terms, because he was speaking to agricultural people. Doubtless that’s true, but the most likely reason He spoke in these terms was simply because that’s the way the kingdom of God works. The germination of seeds and the growth of plants are a mysterious work of nature. Similarly, the beginnings of faith, growth and spiritual maturation are the mysterious work of the Spirit of God.

The kingdoms of the earth come into being in a different manner. People with common interests bind themselves together to achieve certain political and social goals. Earthly kingdoms flourish and grow as long as people work together to achieve the same aims. When relationships deteriorate and goals are no longer common, kingdoms divide and fall. Many earthly kingdoms come into being through violence and exist because of continued force. The kingdom of God is not like the kingdoms of the world, either in the way it comes into being, or in the manner by which it maintains itself. The kingdom of God comes not with force or violence. It comes through the hearing of the word. Like a seed planted in the soil the Holy Spirit causes faith to spring to life. Through the word the Spirit nourishes and sustains faith, until like a tiny seed it grows into a mighty tree; which in turn sends forth seeds that faith may come to others.

God’s word gives birth to faith. God’s word causes faith to mature and grow. God’s word will cause our faith to be fulfilled in eternal life. Often the effect of God’s word seems meagre, but in eternity we will see the glorious harvest that the Holy Spirit has produced through seed of the gospel. Jesus said, “*With what can we compare the kingdom of God? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which when sown on the ground is the smallest of all the seeds on earth. Yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in it.*” God grant that His word have its full effect on our lives in time and for eternity. May His word nourish and sustain our faith until it is fulfilled in life everlasting. In Jesus’ Name. Amen

“ON WHAT HAS NOW BEEN SOWN”

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**On what has now been sown Thy blessings, Lord bestow;
The power is Thine alone, to make it sprout and grow.
Do Thou in grace, the harvest raise, and Thou alone shall have the praise.**

**To Thee our wants are known, from Thee are all our powers;
Accept what is Thine own and pardon what is ours.
Our praises, Lord, and prayers receive, And to Thy Word a blessing give.**

**O grant that each of us, now met before Thee here,
May meet together thus when Thou and Thine appear.
And follow Thee, to heaven, our home. Even so, amen, Lord Jesus come!**

PRAYER

Merciful and Almighty God, the Father of our Saviour Jesus, we offer you praise and thanksgiving, for reconciling us to yourself through His sacrifice on the cross. You made Him who knew no sin to be a sin offering that in Him we would receive your righteousness in forgiveness and be seen as righteous by you, through Him. Bless us to live our days in grateful humility, being ever mindful of the eternal home awaiting us in your presence. In Jesus' Name. Amen

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, Forever and ever. Amen

THE CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

BENEDICTION

2 Corinthians 5:21

“We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake He made Him who had no sin to be sin that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”

Bible Knowledge Quiz

According to John what was the first sign Jesus gave to show His glory?
What did Jesus say He would raise up three days after it was destroyed?
Apart from being an apostle, what was St. Paul's trade?

Answers to last week's Quiz

Three times (2 Corinthians 11:25).
A thorn in his flesh (2 Corinthians 12:7).
His grace (2 Corinthians 129).