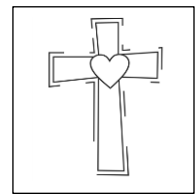


Perley Lutheran Parish
July 26th
Lectionary 17



Welcome and Announcements

- Outdoor services from this point forward through the rest of summer – weather permitting!!! If it's raining Pastor Michele will stream from home ☺ We will continue to mail and email out the services through the summer as well.
- Burial Service for Adlyne Ohnstad will be Tuesday, July 28th at 10am at the Nora Cemetery. Please keep Wayne and Gary and the Ohnstad family in your prayers.
- Thoughts and prayers with Heath Brauckmuller as she has been hospitalized – keep her and Ryan and the girls in your thoughts as she recovers and hopefully gets to come home soon.
- Devotions happening on Wednesday evenings at 7pm – Where's Michele is going well – don't forget to send in your guesses on where she is at – perleyparish@gmail.com or 218-861-6541 or text/call Michele at 701-261-0998
mjenson001@luthersem.edu
- We continue to monitor the COVID crisis and watch for implementation of our Re-Opening Plan
- Continue to send in your offerings. Keep in touch – if you need something please reach out and invite friends to watch!

Confession and Forgiveness:

Blessed be the holy Trinity, +one God, whose steadfast love is everlasting, whose faithfulness endures from generation, to generation. Amen

Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin

Reconciling God,

We confess that we do not trust your abundance, and we deny your presence in our lives. We place our hope in ourselves and rely on our own efforts. We fail to believe that you provide enough for all. We abuse your good creation for our own benefit. We fear difference and do not welcome others as you have welcomed us. We sin in thought, word, and deed. By your grace, forgive us; and in your Spirit, lead us; so that we may live and serve you in newness in life. Amen

Beloved of God, by the radical abundance of divine mercy we have peace with God through +Christ Jesus, through whom we have obtained grace upon grace. Our sins are forgiven. Let us live now in hope. For hope does not disappoint, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

Prayer of the Day

Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of your Son you bring us into your kingdom of justice and mercy. By your Spirit, give us your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Psalms 119: 129-136 (Read Responsively)

Your decrees are wonderful; therefore my soul keeps them. **The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.** With open mouth I pant because I long for your commandments. **Turn to me and be gracious to me, as is your custom toward those who love your name.** Keep my steps steady according to your promise, and never let iniquity have dominion over me. **Redeem me from human oppression, that I may keep your precepts.** Make your face shine upon your servant and teach me your statutes. **My eyes shed streams of tears because your law is not kept.**

First Reading 1 Kings 3:5-12

At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask what I should give you." And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you; and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. And now, O LORD my God,

you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?" It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, I now do according to your word. Indeed I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you and no one like you shall arise after you.

Holy Gospel according to Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52, **Glory to you O Lord**

He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the 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 yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened." "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. "Have you understood all this?" They answered, "Yes." And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

The Gospel of our Lord, **Praise to you, O Christ**

Children's Message

A package of cookies or another item of your choosing. I used Oreo cookies.

There is a television show called "The Price Is Right." Have you ever seen it? It has been on television for more than fifty years! The contestants on the show are shown an item and then they try to guess how much the item costs. The one who guesses closest to the actual price without going over wins the prize. I thought it would be fun to play "The Price Is Right." I brought a package of cookies. Oreo cookies! Yum, yum! On the back of the package there is a tag with the price of the cookies. We will see how close you can come to guessing the price without going over the correct price.

If you think that the price of this package of cookies is MORE than \$4.00, raise your hand. No, if you raised your hand, you are out of the game because these cookies do not cost more than \$4.00.

If you think the price of this package of cookies is LESS than \$2.00, raise your hand. If you raised your hand, you are out of the game because these cookies cost more than \$2.00.

If you think the price of these cookies is MORE than \$3.00, raise your hand. If you raised your hand, you are still in the game. This package of cookies does cost more than \$3.00.

Next, I am going to call out a price, If I call out the price that you think is the right price of the cookies, raise your hand.

\$3.39 - No, you're out of the game.

\$3.49 - No, you're out of the game.

\$3.59 - No! You're out!

\$3.69 - Yes! These cookies cost \$3.69. If your hand is up, you are a winner! You have won the cookies, but I am sure that you will want to share them with the other children when our Bible story is over.

These cookies are good, but \$3.69 is a lot of money for a package of cookies, isn't it? Are they worth it? Perhaps there is another package of cookies that would be just as good for less money. Every day, we have to make choices about the value of things. We ask ourselves, "How much am I willing to pay?"

Jesus once told a story about a man who found a treasure which someone had hidden in a field. He was so happy that he immediately went and sold everything he had and bought the field so that the treasure would be his. (Matthew 13:44)

Jesus told about another man who went in search of fine pearls. When he found a pearl that he thought was the very best, he sold everything that he had so that he could buy the pearl. (Matthew 13:45-46)

These men both found something that they thought was worth giving everything they owned so that they could have it. Do you know what this thing was that Jesus was talking about? He wasn't talking about buried treasure or beautiful pearls, he was talking about the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven is the greatest treasure one could ever desire. It is more precious than silver, gold, or jewels. That is why Jesus calls us to give up all that we have and follow him. Is that too great a price? I don't think so. In fact, I would say, "The Price Is Right!"

Father, nothing we have can compare to life in the kingdom of heaven. Amen.

Message:

Grace and Peace to you from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen

How many of you have ever participated in a scavenger hunt? I have made and directed both for my co-workers at M State and my co-workers when I worked at Slumberland a fun scavenger hunt where the teams had to go out into the community and take pictures of different things and different people in order to reach the ultimate prize at the end of the game. A couple of examples might be – take a picture with a person with red hair, take a picture pumping someone's gas for them or take a picture in an elevator. We had a blast and there's something to following all of the clues, getting them done one by one and reaching that final location at the end that makes it not only fun but exhilarating.

Or how about the TV show Storage Wars – have any of you watched that before? For those that haven't the show is about the sale of storage lockers or storage garages that people have abandoned and quit paying their storage fees on. The owner of the storage company then auctions off the storage space to the highest bidder (let me telling you the bidders are some interesting characters and are stories themselves most episodes). What's crazy about it is that the people bidding on the spaces can only LOOK at what's inside from outside of it. In others words they are bidding on simply what can be seen from the doorway of the space. The spaces could be filled with boxes, could be filled with equipment etc... but no one is able to go in and look through

what's inside and they are simply bidding on a hunch or a hope that what's there is worth more than what they are paying.

Hundreds and hundreds of dollars are spent on these spaces and most times they are filled with dirty clothes, old appliances, basically junk and the buyers hopes get smashed in minutes. Occasionally, however, they may luck out and buy a space that holds an impressive comic collection (valued at over \$130,000 – that actually happened on one of the shoes), a rare antique, or other items that can be resold for a substantial profit. It's everyone's dream – I'm still waiting out for that winning lotter ticket of course - to find a treasure so of course that desire and wish is something that keeps the people continually buying the storage lockers and keeps the viewers continually watching to see what they just might find.

Our gospel today puts us on a little hunt of our own and helps us to discover a treasure as well. The first passages of Gospel this morning talk about the Mustard seed and the yeast – parables that we have heard about often. So I am going to concentrate on the last portion of our Gospel in which the passage actually includes two parables that both seem to be teaching us a similar point.

The first parable has Jesus speaking about a man who was walking through a field and stumbled upon hidden treasure. How wonderful – don't we all want to "stumble" upon a treasure?? This man knows what he's found so he buries the treasure so no one else finds it, takes all that he own – ALL of his possessions – and sells them so he has enough money to purchase the land that the treasure is buried and hidden on. Now it's legally his!

I sometimes question the morality in all of this – I mean shouldn't he have given the treasure to the owner of the land when he found it? Or does this fall into the ever-lasting "Finders keepers, loser weepers" category? All right, that's another sermon I guess, so let's not get hung up on that but try to remember that Jesus uses these parables – these stories – to teach us. So what's the point in this one? Well let's look at the second part of our Gospel to help us understand.

This passage tells us about a merchant who is looking for fine pearls – fine as in those above the normal pearls – and when he finds that exquisite pearl of beauty he knows he needs to have it. He too sells everything – all his other pearls, his house, his possessions, his everything – and uses the money to purchase this amazing and fine, shiny pearl. Seems a bit much if you ask me. Sure this merchant has a beautiful pearl, but now where is he going to live, and how is he going to sustain himself with nothing but a pearl – beautiful as it may be? It's not like he can go out to eat or rent a motel room as he has used ALL of his money to buy that pearl.

Let's be reminded of where this Gospel passage falls in regards to the last few weeks – we've been looking at these parables now for a close to a month now. All of these parables begin with "The kingdom of heaven is like...." Followed by each of them going on to describe something that God does. Remember last week we talked about the Parable of the wheat and the weeds – and how the kingdom of heaven is compared to a man planting GOOD seed and that Jesus is the sower who plants the good seed – us believers – to spread the good news. The week before that we had the Parable of the Sower and how it's important to spread the good news – even if it doesn't always fall on the good soil – in order for it to be sent out and to let others know that you are stewards of that good news. Today we start with the Parable of the Mustard Seed and how the kingdom of heaven is compared to a tiny mustard seed that a man planted and which grew into a tree. It then goes on to the kingdom of heaven being compared to a woman who takes a pinch of yeast to leaven dough. Both of these parables have Jesus making a point that while the church would have humble beginnings – the size of a mustard seed or a pinch of yeast – he himself was establishing it and would ensure that the church would grow and grow.

He continues on then with the Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl. Both of these also begin with those familiar words, "The kingdom of heaven is like..." and if Jesus continues to stay with his previous patterns then the man who discovers the hidden treasure and the merchant who sells everything to buy that

one pearl is none other than Jesus himself. And let's go a step further then, if Jesus is the merchant than who or what is the pearl – well us of course. Jesus gave up everything – everything – for us didn't he? What's ironic to me in this parable is that we – you and I - are clearly not always exquisite and beautiful and shiny like a pearl. We are covered in dirt because our sinful selves. But look at the other parable as well – where was that treasure found?? It too was found in the dirt and in the field and buried amongst more dirt. We too are that treasure in this story. Jesus knows that we aren't shiny and beautiful all the time – but just like the merchant will wash off the dirt and slime from the brilliant pearl and just like the man will wash off the dirt from his buried treasure, Jesus washes us as sinners to be loved and forgiven by him.

So how does this all make you feel? To think that we are considered a hidden treasure and an exquisite pearl? Sure we all have those moments when we question what we are doing or not doing with our lives. Maybe you have those moments when you just can't understand what God has planned. What about those times when you feel like no one gets you or cares about what is happening with you? Those are the times to remember these parables and what really matters is what God thinks about you, and what the Son did for you. Jesus sought you and bought you – paid the ultimate price just for you. He gave up everything – his glory in heaven, his honor and especially his own life to make you and me his treasured possessions. Romans 8:28 says it best "In all things God works for the good of those who love him". After all, if a merchant sold every last thing to purchase that pearl – if Jesus gave up everything for you and me – don't you think he would also do everything to take care of it and us and protect it and us? That's the same for us – we too are priceless treasure and we too are being cared for and protected from whatever you may be enduring right now.

Let's review for a minute – One tiny mustard seed equals a tree big enough for birds to nest in. A handful of yeast equals loaves of bread to feed many. You and I are a treasure – buried in all our sinful dirt – yet purchased and loved by God. You and I are a brilliant pearl – priceless to God.

So what if I told you that today those bidders from Storage Wars were planning on showing up right here? What if the auctioneer flung open the doors of our church for all to look inside? What treasures do you think they would SEE and do you think they would be eager to bid or rather be a bit disappointed by what they saw? How much after all can a church full of sinners be worth? And how much profit do you think they are going to make on a bunch of old Bibles, a font full of water, a cup of wine and plate of bread? For many they would say not much, right? But you and I - well we know better. For you have opened up the Parable of the Pearl and the Hidden Treasure today and have learned who Jesus' priceless treasure is – you and me! Our response to those who don't feel the space worthy of bidding should be to pray to God to instill in us all the faith the size of a mustard seed, knowing that God can bring us growth and treasure beyond what we see, what we know or what we understand so that our lives can be a picture to others of the love and mercy of our Father in Heaven. Amen

Let us pray: Heavenly Father, we give you thanks for the seed of your Word that you have planted in our hearts. Help us, we pray to value that which you have given us and to make following Christ the most important thing in our lives so we can do you will and share your love and Word that you have proclaimed through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn of the Day: Children of the Heavenly Father
Children of the heavenly Father safely in his bosom gather;

Nestling bird or star in heaven such a refuge ne'er was given

God his own doth tend and nourish, in his holy courts they flourish.
From all evil things he spares them, in his mighty arms he bears them.

Neither life nor death shall ever from the Lord his children sever;
Unto them his grace he showeth, and their sorrows all he knoweth.

Though he giveth or he taketh, God his children ne'er forsaketh;
His the loving purpose solely to preserve them pure and holy.

Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian/catholic Church, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen

Prayers of the People: (Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer**)

Confidant of your care and helped by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

Merciful God, your reign is revealed to us in common things: a mustard shrub, a woman baking bread, a net that catches fish. Help your church witness to the surprising yet common ways you encounter us in daily life. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer**

When your word is opened, it gives light and understanding. Increase our understanding and awe of your creation: guide the work of scientists and researchers – especially these days as the work and test to find us a cure for this pandemic. Treasuring the earth, may we live as grateful and healing caretakers of our home. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer**

As the birds of the air nest in branches of trees, gather the nations and the people of these nations into the welcoming share of your merciful reign. Direct leaders to build trust with each other and walk in the way of peace. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer**

Protecting God, we have created divisions you will not own. In places of conflict – be it from safe practices because of COVID or from racial disparity. God of mercy, your grace is poured out for all. Inspire authorities and politicians to act with compassion. Teach us to overcome fear with hope, meet hate with love, and welcome one another as we would welcome you. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer**

God of the season, in the midst of summer, give us refreshment, renewal, and new opportunities. We pray for the safety of those who travel. We pray for those who cannot take the rest they need. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer**

Loving God, you show steadfast love and direct us to ask of you what we need. Help this congregation ask boldly for what is most needed. Refresh us with new dreams of being your people in this place and time. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer**

Your Spirit helps us in our weakness. Help us when we do not know how to pray. Give comfort to the dying, refuge to the weary, justice for those oppressed, and healing to the sick. We lift up those within our congregations and friends of our members like Alana and Jeff and Kirk and all those that join us through streaming who are in need of peace and healing. We ask that you be with those that we now name in our hearts as well..... Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer**

God of community, we give thanks for this congregation. Give us passion to embrace your mission and the vision to recognize when you are leading us. Teach us how live more faithfully and fully with each other. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer**

In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Words of Institution

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.

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

Holy Communion

Blessing:

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

God, the creator, +Jesus the Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the comforter, bless you and keep you in eternal love. Amen

Sending Hymn: Sent Forth by God's Blessing

Sent forth by God's blessing. Our true faith confessing

The people of God from his dwelling take leave.

The supper is ended. Oh, now be extended.

The fruits of this service in all who believe.

The seed of his teaching, receptive souls reaching,

Shall blossom in action for God and for all.

His grace did invite us, His love shall unite us

To work for God's kingdom and answer his call.

Dismissal:

Go in peace. Christ is with you. **Thanks be to God.**



The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.
Matthew 13:44



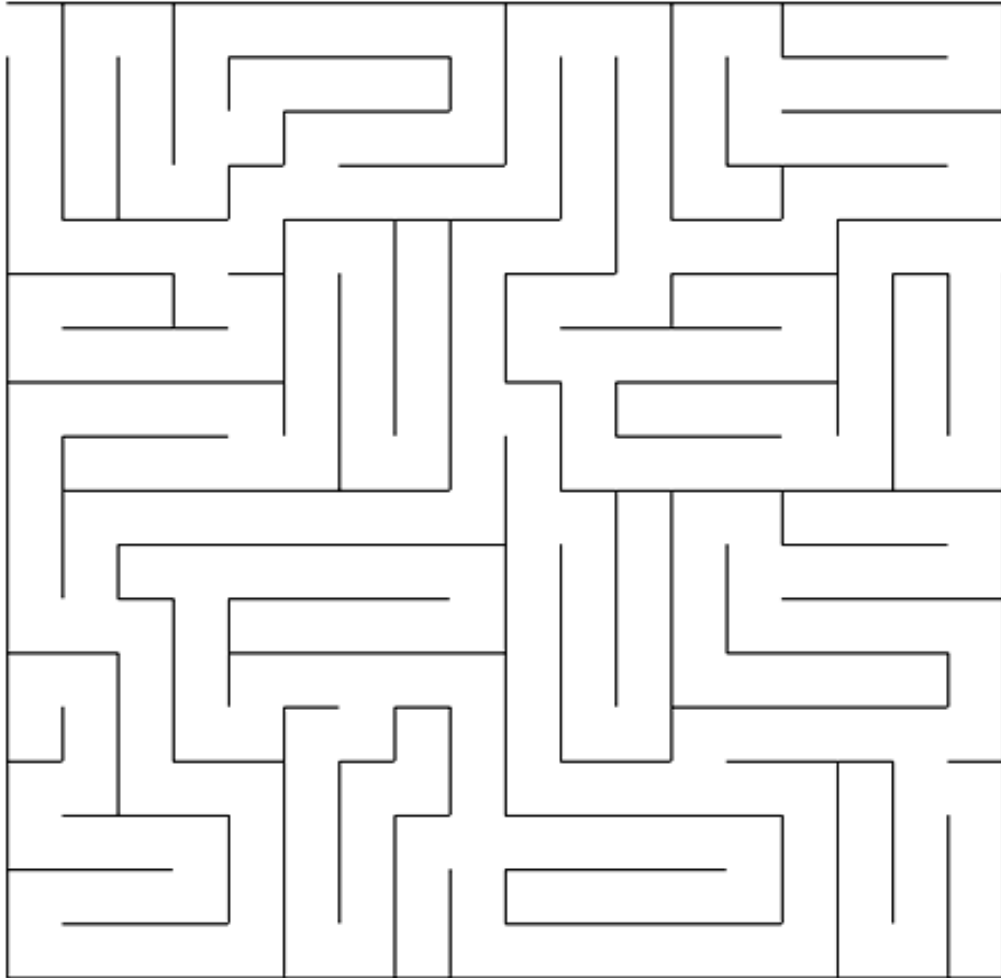
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Merchant and the exquisite pearl

Treasure in the Field

Start



*Can you find the way to the hidden
treasure?*

Hidden Treasure and the Pearl

When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it. Matthew 13:46 (NIV)

Based on Matthew 13:44-46 (NIV)



M K E J O Y A G A I N E V A D
H B Z G M H D P G N U V S R H
O I O N A V K L V L J D S T T
V Q B U M K R I A Q U U F Y R
V K M M G U A V N I F N O A E
F F I S G H V S Z G E O U R A
S I Z W W E T S J D D K N M S
O D E K V X D T D C L O D Q U
L F D L N B B I G F C X M E R
D M R K D C H S S I R C S T E
O N V L O V L L K F H H A K T
H R L L M R U H E A V E N G R
X A C P A W B A B F R B X X D
Z K Z E P X A E D G H H N Z L
Y I P L N M S P M A N L X F B

GREAT
KINGDOM
VALUE

AGAIN
FIELD
ALL

SOLD
JOY
HEAVEN

TREASURE
FOUND
MAN

BOUGHT
HIDDEN
PEARLS

Hidden Treasure and the Pearl

Complete the paragraph by filling in the blanks with the correct words from the word bank at the bottom of the story.



"The kingdom of heaven is like _____ hidden in a _____.

When a man _____ it, he hid it again, and then in his _____

went and _____ all he had and _____ that field.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine

_____. When he found one of _____, he went

away and sold _____ he had and bought it.

Matthew 13:44-46 (NIV)

bought
everything

field
found

great
joy

pearls
sold

treasure
value