



EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Eighth Sunday After Pentecost

July 26, 2020

Anglican Parish of Raymond Terrace
www.stjohnsraymondterrace.org

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Pray:

May I speak to you in the name of GOD – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen



It was the custom of the day for a man to present a dowry or substantial gift, to the family of his future wife. This was to compensate the family for the loss of the girl. Jacob's dowry was not of material possessions, for he had none to offer. Instead, he agreed to work 7 years for Laban. But there was another custom of the land that Laban did not tell Jacob. The older daughter had to be married first. By giving Jacob Leah and not Rachel, Laban tricked him into promising another 7 years of hard work.

People often wonder if working a long time for something they desire is worth it. Jacob worked 7 years to marry Rachel. After being tricked, he agreed to work 7 more years for her – although he did get to marry Rachel

shortly after he married Leah! The most important goals and desires are worth working and waiting for. Movies and Television have created the illusion that people have to wait only about an hour to solve their problems or get what they want. However, we mustn't be trapped into thinking the same is true in real life. Patience is the hardest when we need it the most; but it is the key to achieving our goals.

Jacob was enraged when he learned he had been tricked. The deceiver of Esau had now been deceived himself. How natural it is for us to become upset at an injustice done to us while closing our eyes to the injustices we do to others. Sin has a way of coming back to haunt us. Although Jacob was tricked by Laban, he kept his part of the bargain. There was more at stake than just Jacob's hurt. There was Rachel to think about, as well as GOD's plan for his life. When we are tricked by others, keeping our part of the bargain may still be

wise. Nursing our wounds or plotting revenge makes us unable to see from GOD's perspective.

^Our psalm teaches us that the values outlined in GOD's Word include love, service, honesty, integrity and prayer. These help all relationships, and they are especially vital to home life. Is your home heavenly or hectic? Reading and obeying GOD's Word is a good place to start for our families.

Our passage from the letter of Paul to the Romans tells us that as a believer, we are not left to our own resources to cope with problems. Even when we don't know the right words to pray, the Holy Spirit prays with us and for us – and GOD answers. With GOD helping us to pray, we don't need to be afraid to come before Him. We must ask the Holy Spirit to intercede for us "in accordance with the will of GOD." Then, when we bring our requests to GOD, we can trust that He will always do what is best. GOD works in ALL things – not just isolated incidents – for OUR good. This does not mean that all that happens

to us is good. Evil is prevalent in our fallen world; but GOD is able to turn every circumstance around for our long-range good. Note that GOD is not working to make us happy, but to fulfil His purpose. Note also that this promise is not for everybody. It can be claimed only by those who love GOD and are called according to His purpose. Those who are “called” are those the Holy Spirit convinces and enables to receive CHRIST. Such people have a new perspective, a new mind-set on life. They trust in GOD, not life’s treasures. They look for their security in heaven, not on earth. They learn to accept, not resent, pain and persecution because GOD is with them.

GOD’s ultimate goal for us is to make us like CHRIST¹. As we become more and more like Him, we discover our true selves, the persons we were created to be. We become conformed into CHRIST’s likeness by reading and heeding His Word, by studying His life on earth

¹ 1John 3:2

through the Gospels, by being filled with His Spirit and by doing His work in the world. GOD's wisdom and power are supreme. He will guide and protect us until one day we stand in His presence.

If we ever think that we are not good enough for salvation, then we need to think again. If GOD gave His Son for us, then He isn't going to hold back His gift of salvation from us. If CHRIST gave His life for you, He isn't going to turn around and condemn you. He will not withhold anything you need to live for Him. The letter to the Romans is more than a theological explanation of GOD's redeeming grace – it is a letter of comfort and confidence addressed, not only to the Romans but to us. Our Gospel passage for today contains 3 parables and a scolding for the people of Nazareth.

^The parable of the Hidden Treasure teaches us that that the Kingdom of Heaven is more valuable than anything else we can have; and we must be willing to give up everything to obtain it. The man who discovered the

treasure hidden in the field stumbled upon it by accident but knew its value when He found it. Although the transaction cost the man everything, he paid nothing for the priceless treasure itself. It came free, with the field. Nothing is more precious than the kingdom of heaven – yet GOD gives it to us as a gift.

^In the second parable, the kingdom of heaven is not the pearl but the merchant. In contrast to the previous picture, JESUS is now displaying another aspect of the kingdom. The contrast becomes vivid in the transaction – the kingdom pays the ultimate price to possess the pearl – the price GOD was willing to pay to redeem us.

^The parable of the fishing net has the same meaning as the parable of the wheat and the weeds. We are to obey GOD and tell others about His grace and goodness – but we cannot dictate who is part of the kingdom and who is not. The sorting will be done at the last judgement by those infinitely more qualified than we.

Anyone who understands GOD's real purpose in the law as revealed in the Old Testament has a real treasure. The Old Testament points the way to JESUS, the Messiah. JESUS always upheld its authority and relevance. But there is a double benefit to those who understand JESUS' teaching about the kingdom of heaven. This was a new treasure JESUS was revealing. Both old and new teaching give practical guidelines for faith and for living in the world. The religious leaders, however, were trapped in the old and blinded to the new. They were looking for a future kingdom that came after judgement. JESUS, however, taught that the kingdom was now; and judgement was in the future.

The people of Nazareth couldn't get past the fact that JESUS grew up in their town and that He couldn't possibly be a prophet, let alone the Messiah. They did not listen to His timeless message because they couldn't see beyond the man.

JESUS did few miracles in his hometown “because of their lack of faith.” Lack of faith blinds people to the truth and robs them of hope. These people missed the Messiah – and we can too. We may not see GOD’s work because of our unbelief. We need to believe, ask GOD for a mighty work in our lives and expect Him to act – looking with the eyes of faith.



Jacob, who deceived his brother Esau, was deceived by His future father-in-law to work doubly hard for the woman he loved.

Our psalm teaches us that the values outlined in GOD’s Word include love, service, honesty, integrity and prayer. These help all relationships, and they are especially vital to home life.

Paul in his letter to the Romans tells us that as a believer, we are not left to our own resources to cope with problems. ^The last 2 verses are so re-assuring: ³⁸For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels,

nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And our Gospel today reassures us of GOD's love and sacrifice for us through JESUS; and reminds us that even though we may not see GOD's work because of our unbelief, we need to believe, ask GOD for a mighty work in our lives and expect Him to act – by looking with the eyes of faith.



May we pray:

Gracious GOD, your love is unbounded, and your mercy is beyond what we justly deserve. May our lives be signs of our gratitude and daily bear witness to the love we have inherited from your Son, our LORD JESUS CHRIST, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen