

# Pastor's Bible Class

June 16, 2024

## The Fourth Sunday after Pentecost – Proper 6

### Hymn #894 “For the Fruits of His Creation”



1 For the fruits of His cre - a - tion, Thanks be to God.  
2 In the just re - ward of la - bor, God's will is done.  
3 For the har - vests of the Spir - it, Thanks be to God.



For His gifts to ev - 'ry na - tion, Thanks be to God. For the  
In the help we give our neigh - bor, God's will is done. In our  
For the good we all in - her - it, Thanks be to God. For the



plow - ing, sow - ing, reap - ing, Si - lent growth while we are sleep - ing,  
world - wide task of car - ing For the hun - gry and de - spair - ing,  
won - ders that as - tound us, For the truths that still con - found us,



Fu - ture needs in earth's safe - keep - ing, Thanks be to God.  
In the har - vests we are shar - ing, God's will is done.  
Most of all, that love has found us, Thanks be to God.

### Read Ezekiel 17:22-24

1. Read Isaiah 11:1, Jeremiah 23:5 and Zechariah 3:8. How do these verses provide a context for the “shoot” imagery used in verse 22?
2. The prophecy continues with to a reference to a “high and lofty mountain” on which the shoot will be planted. To what does this phrase refer?
3. In verse 23 a reference is made to a “cedar” tree. What qualities will the “noble cedar” possess?
4. Verse 24 captures a theme that is familiar throughout Scripture. Read Luke 1:46-53 and 18:9-17 and comment on the meaning of Ezekiel 17:24 in light of these passages.

### **Read Mark 4:26-34**

5. The theme of growth is continued in Mark 4, where Jesus also speaks in parables. What is the job of a parable? See Mark 4:10-12.

6. What is the Kingdom of God? See Luke 17:20-21.

7. Luther wrote, “Thy kingdom come. *What does this mean?* The kingdom of God comes indeed without our prayer, of itself; but we pray in this petition that it may come unto us also. *How is this done?* When our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we *believe* His holy Word and lead a godly life here in time and there in eternity” (Small Catechism).

If the Kingdom is based on faith, how is faith created? See Romans 10:17.

8. What then is the seed Jesus talks about in these two parables?

9. Read Isaiah 55:11, I Peter 2:2 and I Corinthians 3:6-7. What do these passages tell us about how the seed works?

10. In verse 28, Jesus uses the phrase “by itself” to describe the growth of the seed. In Greek, this phrase is translated from the word “automata” (from which we get our word “automatic”). This word is only used one other time in the Bible to describe the miraculous opening of a gate. Read Acts 12:10 and its surrounding context, then consider whose action is emphasized by this word.

11. What does this tell us about our role in spiritual matters such as forgiveness, salvation and growth?

12. What does this tell us about God?

### **Devotional Thought (The Lutheran Study Bible)**

“God’s kingdom grows mysteriously of itself, at its own pace, and through the power of the Word. This reality often causes frustration among those who eagerly long for a rapid expansion of the Kingdom, and all the more as we only have a short-term view of things. But God’s kingdom grows according to His plan and timetable. And it is a great blessing that things ultimately depend on Him and not us, for only He is able to bring home a great harvest for life eternal” (TLSB, 1663).

### **Prayer**

Lord, as You have begun a good work by planting Your kingdom in our world, bring it to a full harvest in Your own good time. Amen.