

**Daily Office Devotional, Thursday, November 5, 2020**  
**Proper 26, the week of the twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost**  
**The Rev. David W. Perkins, Th.D.**

Daily Office Lectionary Readings

AM Psalm [70], 71; PM Psalm 74

Ecclus. 44:1-15; Rev. 16:12-21; Luke 13:18-30

Morning Prayer, Rite 2, page 75, Book of Common Prayer

Evening Prayer, Rite 2, page 115, Book of Common Prayer

Compline (Night Prayer), Page 127, Book of Common Prayer

Daily Office Gospel, Luke 13:18-30

18 He said therefore, 'What is the kingdom of God like? And to what should I compare it? 19It is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in the garden; it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches.' 20And again he said, 'To what should I compare the kingdom of God? 21It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.' 22Jesus went through one town and village after another, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem.

23 Someone asked him, 'Lord, will only a few be saved?' He said to them, 24'Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able. 25When once the owner of the house has got up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, "Lord, open to us," then in reply he will say to you, "I do not know where you come from." 26Then you will begin to say, "We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets." 27But he will say, "I do not know where you come from; go away from me, all you evildoers!" 28There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrown out. 29Then people will come from east and west, from north and south, and will eat in the kingdom of God. 30Indeed, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.'

David's Reflections

If healings and deliverances and transformations are happening all around us, they are signs of God's pervasive presence and activity in the world. Are we aware of them, or are we ignoring them, choosing to focus on the negatives that create doubt

and despair. God's presence and activity Jesus compares to a mustard seed, a tiny beginning that grows to a huge plant and leaven that causes flour to rise. That presence and activity may be as unseen as a seed buried or leaven hidden in dough.

So, it's possible that the salvation we might assume is absent actually is happening all around and we're missing it. That certainly was the case with Jesus' contemporaries. His healings, comparable to the mustard seed and the leaven, prompted resistance and misunderstanding on the part of some.

The question about how many will be saved came from someplace other than a mustard seed/leaven perspective. The questioner saw the situation as desperate and God's efforts to save as falling short. Only a few might be included. Jesus gave a mustard seed/leaven answer. The beginnings in Jesus' ministry might be mustard seed size, but people would come from the four corners of the earth by the multitudes to share in God's final salvation supper. Only those who did not see and believe will be on the outside looking in, and they will be few in number indeed.

Can we allow Jesus' perspective to stretch ours? If we let our vision of what God is about in the world get defined in terms of the negatives and lacks we see, we will actually miss the mustard seed/leaven phenomenon. We will put ourselves at risk of a kind of despair that blinds and smothers and deadens the capacity to exercise faith. Better to know that God specializes in small beginnings and that God's fruitful love sprouts abundantly from those mustard seed and leavens the loaf of the world. Better to live in expectation of that and be on watch for its beginnings and its fruition.

*Proper 26, The Sunday closest to November 2*

Almighty and merciful God, it is only by your gift that your faithful people offer you true and laudable service: Grant that we may run without stumbling to obtain your heavenly promises; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. *Amen.*

*A Collect for Guidance*

O God, whose Son Jesus is the good shepherd of your people; Grant that when we hear his voice we may know him who calls us each by name, and follow where he leads; who, with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.* (BCP 100)

*For the Unity of the Church*

Almighty Father, whose blessed Son before his passion prayed for his disciples that

they might be one, as you and he are one: Grant that your Church, being bound together in love and obedience to you, may be united in one body by the one Spirit, that the world may believe in him whom you have sent, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.* (BCP, 255)

*A Prayer for Light*

Lighten our darkness, we beseech you, O Lord; and by your great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of your only Son, Jesus Christ, *Amen.* (BCP, 111)

*A Collect for Mission*

O God of all the nations of the earth: Remember the multitudes who have been created in your image but have not known the redeeming work of our Savior Jesus Christ; and grant that, by the prayers and labors of your holy Church, they may be brought to know and worship you as you have been revealed in your Son; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.* (BCP, 257)