

THIRD QUARTER MESSAGES 2020

On Sunday July 5, Matthew 11:25-30 invites us to “Take a Load Off”. This metaphor-rich passage invites us into a place of peace. In our wounded time, who is it that most needs the refreshment and nourishment of Jesus’ invitation? Who are the people who work to make the USA a place of justice and democracy? How can we take this invitation on the day after July 4 and let it call us to better? One hint: Jesus argues in the first verses in this passage that the answers aren’t held in some complex spin, but are self evident to the youngest and simplest among us.

For Sunday July 12, through Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23 “Producing” takes us into the challenge given in the Parable of the Sower”. This was thrown out not as a way to isolate four kinds of people, but rather to ask us to make of ourselves the best soil for the message and practices of Jesus. It’s a personal challenge to produce our own good soil so we can produce goodness for the world and for God.

On Sunday July 19, In “Lush” Matthew 13:24-30 gives us a question through a picture: Will we be lush, so lush as to crowd out the weeds of destruction that always are around us?

Sunday July 26, through Matthew 13:31-33, “Multiplication Part I” takes us into some of the “Kingdom Parables”. In the first one, God’s reign is an exponentially growing goodness. In the second, a Woman (God in this picture) brings yeast into the life of flour and it once again multiplies. Goodness has been planted. We are people of the mustard seed and the yeast. Our work is beautiful and promising.

Sunday August 2, Matthew 14:13-21 brings us to “Multiplication Part II”. While the gospels are radically different takes on the life and gifts of Jesus, but they ALL have this story in one form or another. Where Jesus goes, *great* good is done, and it multiplies, expands from one person to another.

For Sunday August 9, we get to hear again from the dynamic and influential JJ Warren!

Sunday August 16 brings us to a beautiful story: In “Open”, Matthew 15:21-28 shows us a woman begging Jesus for an act of compassion. He says no. But she

persists. Jesus, open to the spirit's words even in someone who isn't part of his Jewish community, responds with a gracious act and praises her faith.

Sunday August 23 brings us to one of the climaxes of the book of Matthew in chapter 16, verses 13-20. "The Center" is the title of the message. In a way the term Messiah implied a revolutionary. And Matthew uses this moment to make that claim. And he is. Jesus is capable of upending our directions and calling us to better. He is capable of drawing us out to do greater work than we would have ever imagined. When his call takes center stage in our lives, we are changed. Awakened.

Sunday August 30, we face a famous passage: in "Does It Have to Hurt?" Matthew 16: 21-28 shows us Peter's hope that Jesus wouldn't have to suffer. Cute idea, but as unrealistic as anything can be. Especially for someone who brings great goodness to systems that are opposed to great goodness! So Jesus calls him down vociferously. All of us fantasize at times that we won't have to hurt to do good.

Sunday September 6, Matthew 18:15-20

Sunday September 13, Matthew 18:21-35

Sunday September 20, Matthew 20:1-16

Sunday September 27, Matthew 21:23-32