

Fourth Sunday After Pentecost

July 6, 2025 10:30 AM

Parable of the Sower

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church



4536 Hickory Lincolnton Highway, Newton, North Carolina 28658

Church Office: (704) 462-1035 email: gracenalcnewton@aol.com
www.gracelutheran-newton.org

Rev. Doug Hefner cell: (980) 234-8848 email: pastorhefner@aol.com

Sandi Tallant – Organist Todd Childers – Administrative Assistant

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 9am to 1pm

Tuesday and Thursday 12pm to 4pm

WELCOME TO ALL WHO WORSHIP at Grace Church this morning as we gather to worship the Father, + Son and Holy Spirit in truth. As you entered the sanctuary today, you received this bulletin containing the order for worship and announcements. Please also notice the Prayer List where you will find a listing of all the known prayer concerns. You are invited to use this as a guide for your personal prayers throughout the coming week. If you need information about our congregation or if you'd like to update your information, make sure to fill out the yellow Worship Today Form and place it in the offering plate at the time of the offering. If you have a prayer concern, indicate that on your Worship Today Form at the bottom or on the reverse side. If you are seeking a Church Home or would like more information about Grace, please contact Pastor Doug (980) 234-8848.

***Stand** *Hymnals in Pew Rack: LBW = Green WOV = Blue TCH = Burgundy*

PRELUDE *Please observe silence for meditation and prayer.*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*** BRIEF ORDER OF CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

P In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P God of all mercy and consolation, come to the aid of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that, attentive to your Word, we may confess our sins, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen.

P In the presence of God, who sees our hearts and our minds, who forgives all our sins, whose mercy endures forever, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection and confession of our sins before God and one another.

P Gracious God,

C have mercy on us. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things done and left undone. Uphold us by your Spirit so that we may live and serve you in newness of life, to the honor and glory of your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

P Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life in the name of the Father, +Son and Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

* **GATHERING HYMN** “Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty”

LBW 250

* **GREETING**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. C: **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Lord of all power and might, you are the author and giver of all good things. Graft into our hearts a love of your name. Increase in us true faith, nourish us with what is good, and watch over all who are in your care. Grant this, we pray, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

The congregation may be seated.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 55: 10-13

¹⁰“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
¹¹so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

¹²For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

¹³Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall make a name for the LORD, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.”

L: The Word of the Lord. C: **Thanks be to God**

PSALM 65: 9-14

⁹You visit the earth and water it abundantly; you make it very plenteous;
the river of God is full of water.

**¹⁰You prepare the grain,
for so you provide for the earth.**

¹¹You drench the furrows and smooth out the ridges;
with heavy rain you soften the ground and bless its increase.

**¹²You crown the year with your goodness,
and your paths overflow with plenty.**

¹³May the fields of the wilderness be rich for grazing,
and the hills be clothed with joy.

**¹⁴May the meadows cover themselves with flocks,
and the valleys cloak themselves with grain;
let them shout for joy and sing.**

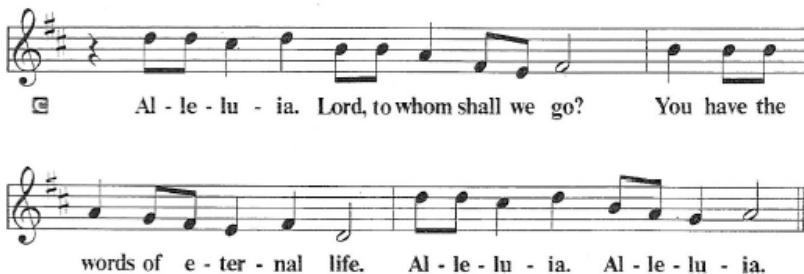
SECOND READING: Romans 8: 12-17

¹²So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. ¹³For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” ¹⁶The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

L: The Word of the Lord. C: Thanks be to God

The congregation is invited to stand.

*** GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** “Alleluia, Lord to Whom Shall We Go”



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

***GOSPEL: Luke 8: 4-15**

P: The holy gospel according to St. Luke. C: Glory to you, O Lord.

⁴ And when a great crowd was gathering and people from town after town came to him, he said in a parable, ⁵ “A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it. ⁶ And some fell on the rock, and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. ⁷ And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it. ⁸ And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold.” As he said these things, he called out, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” ⁹ And when his disciples asked him what this parable meant, ¹⁰ he said, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that ‘seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.’ ¹¹ Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. ¹² The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be

saved. ¹³ And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away. ¹⁴ And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. ¹⁵ As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.

L: The Gospel of the Lord. C: Praise to You O Christ!

The congregation may be seated.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON



“Let Us Hear the Word of Grace, Hold it Fast in Our Hearts, and Bear Fruit Patiently for the Glory of God!”
Pastor Doug

***HYMN OF THE DAY** “Almighty God, Your Word is Cast”

(Tune: Brother James' Air)

1. Almighty God, Your Word Is Cast Like Seed Into The Ground;
Now Let The Dew Of Heaven Descend, And Righteous Fruits Abound.
Now Let The Dew Of Heaven Descend, And Righteous Fruits Abound

2. Let Not The Foe Of Christ And Man This Holy Seed Remove,
But Give It Root In Every Heart To Bring Forth Fruits Of Love.
But Give It Root In Every Heart To Bring Forth Fruits Of Love.

3. Let Not The World's Deceitful Cares The Rising Plant Destroy,
But Let It Yield A Hundredfold The Fruits Of Peace And Joy.
But Let It Yield A Hundredfold The Fruits Of Peace And Joy.

4. Oft As The Precious Seed Is Sown, Your Quickening Grace Bestow,
That All Whose Souls The Truth Receive, Its Saving Power May Know.
That All Whose Souls The Truth Receive, Its Saving Power May Know.

***THE APOSTLES' CREED**

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the
forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Response at the end of each petition. P: Lord in your mercy, **C: Hear our prayer.**

***SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

P: The peace of Christ be with you always. **C: And also with you.**

Worshipers may greet one another with “the Peace of Christ.”

The assembly may be seated.

* **OFFERING** In response to God's blessings, we offer our tithes to the Lord
HOLY COMMUNION – MEAL OF GRACE

* **OFFERTORY**

Let the Vineyards



Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our

cup of bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were

sown, that we may be fed with the bread of life. Gath - er the

hopes and the dreams of all; u - nite them with the prayers we

of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your pres - ence, and

give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

* **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

P: God of all creation, C: all you have made is good, and your love endures forever. You bring forth bread from the earth and fruit from the vine. Nourish us with these gifts, that we might be for the world signs of your gracious presence in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

*DIALOGUE AND PREFACE

Music notation for 'The Lord be with you.' in G clef, common time, and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: The Lord be with you.

Music notation for 'And also with you.' in G clef, common time, and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: And also with you.

Music notation for 'Lift up your hearts.' in G clef, common time, and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: Lift up your hearts.

Music notation for 'We lift them to the Lord.' in G clef, common time, and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: We lift them to the Lord.

Music notation for 'Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.' in G clef, common time, and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

Music notation for 'It is right to give him thanks and praise.' in G clef, common time, and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

*HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Music notation for 'Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of pow'r and might.' in G clef, common time, and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of pow'r and might:

Music notation for 'Heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho - san - na.' in G clef, common time, and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: Heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho - san - na.

Music notation for 'Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.' in G clef, common time, and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Music notation for 'Ho-san - na in the high - est.' in G clef, common time, and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: Ho-san - na in the high - est.

* **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**
* **LORD'S PRAYER**
* **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P: The Gifts of God for the People of God. C: **Thanks be to God!**

The assembly may be seated.

All are invited to receive Holy Communion

COMMUNION SONG **Lamb of God**



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace.

The congregation is invited to stand.

* **COMMUNION BLESSING AND PRAYER**

P: God of the harvest, with this bread of life and cup of salvation you have nourished the seed of your Word planted in our hearts. Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit, that we may sow the seeds of love and salvation in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen .

* **BLESSING**

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace.

*SENDING HYMN “Bringing in the Sheaves”

1. Sowing in the morning, sowing seeds of kindness,
Sowing in the noontide and the dewy eve;
Waiting for the harvest, and the time of reaping,
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.

*Refrain: Bringing in the sheaves, bringing in the sheaves,
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves;
Bringing in the sheaves, bringing in the sheaves,
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.*

2. Sowing in the sunshine, sowing in the shadows,
Fearing neither clouds nor winter's chilling breeze;
By and by the harvest, and the labor ended,
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves. **Refrain**
3. Going forth with weeping, sowing for the Master,
Though the loss sustained our spirit often grieves;
When our weeping's over, He will bid us welcome,
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves. **Refrain**

*DISMISSAL

P: Having received the Seed of God's Word, may its roots grow deep into your heart that the love of God may grow and produce an abundant harvest in your life. Go in peace and serve the Lord. **C: Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE



In the Grace Church Family:

Jeffry Bivens, Rick & Cindy Bivens, Glenda Childers, Pat Dietz, Allen and Kay Hatchett, Larry Heavner, Lorene Heavner, Larry & Brenda Jarrett, Martha Johnson, Faye Lane, Cole Leatherman, Phil & Malinda Leatherman, Tim Leatherman, Betty Matheson, Joe

Momier, Jane Moss, Christine Norman, Michael Norman, Tricia and Dan Panek, Mike, Debi & Stephen Pisko, Helen Smith, Ethan Starnes, Sandi Tallant, Libby Travis, Shirley Warlick, Ken & Tirzah Welch, Scott & Carolyn Whisnant, Nancy Willis, and Jack Wilfong. **Nursing Home:** Juanita Haas (Trinity Village), Ted Whisnant (Trinity Village), Dan Panek (Trinity Ridge)

Friends and Relatives in our Prayers: Pray for Peace in Israel and the World, New Covenant Lutheran Mission Church, Clinton Childers, Evelyn Childers, Harrison Hefner, Lisa Honeycutt, Randy & Rita Neill, Mel Raybourne, Anita Sabino, Jeffrey Smith, Karlee Speagle, Scott Speagle, Monica Thomas, the United States of America, and especially the families of those who have given their lives in the service of our country and those who continue to protect our freedoms and for all members of our Armed Forces.

COMING UP AT GRACE THIS WEEK

Today: Fourth Sunday After Pentecost

9:30am – Sunday School 10:30am - Worship Celebration

Saturday:

9:00am – Grace Prayer Breakfast at Four Peas in a Pod

HAPPY JULY BIRTHDAY TO:

July 13 – Frankie Crouse, Lorene Heavner

July 18 – Emily Sipe July 20 – Michael Scronce

July 22 – Nicky Jarrett, Scott Whisnant

July 24 – Sherry Biggerstaff July 27 – Jack Wilfong

July 28 – Harvey Leatherman July 30 – Shirley Warlick

ANNOUNCEMENT: We now have Facebook! Look for **Grace Lutheran Newton NC** and become our friend. Please like us and share us with your other friends. Please send pictures or messages. This is your Facebook page.

Ministers of Grace – All the People of Grace

Pastor – Reverend Doug Hefner Board President – Tim Eckard

Lector – Tim Eckard Youth Leader – Stormy Shull

Altar Preparation – Cindy Bivens

Communion Assistants – Cindy Bivens & Sheila Drum

Ushers – Tim Leatherman and Chris Jarrett

Offering Counters – Todd Childers & Jason Yoder

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

“Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

Matthew 13: 8-9

In the parable from which these words are taken, Jesus compares preaching God's word to sowing seed on four types of soil: 1) hard soil, 2) rocky soil, 3) thorny soil, and 4) good soil. In the parable, the sower is the preacher; the seed is God's word, and the four types of soil represent four conditions of the human heart. The hard soil represents a hard heart that God's word cannot penetrate. The rocky soil represents a shallow heart that receives God's word but does not allow it to put down roots. The thorny soil represents a worldly heart that receives God's word but then chokes it out by worldly busyness before it can grow and bear fruit. Finally, the good soil represents a soft heart that receives God's word, and allows it to put down roots, grow, and bear fruit.

The purpose of the parable is to explain why some people respond to Jesus' parables while others don't. Thus, this parable is self-reflexive since it is a parable about parables that provides a lens for understanding the preaching and mixed reception of parables. In this regard, Jesus tells His disciples that he teaches in parables both to reveal and to conceal the truth. Sadly, however, this important section (vv. 10-17) has been excised from the lectionary reading, perhaps due to a condescending fear that lay people cannot handle the mysteries of election and predestination.

The good news, however, is that the condition of the human heart is not constant! One who rejects God's word today may well receive it tomorrow! After all, due to original sin, we are all like the hard, rocky, and/or thorny soil by nature. But our hearts have been changed by the Spirit working through the word. In this regard, Scripture tells us that God's word is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword (see Heb. 4:12). So, even if someone's heart is hardened to God's word today, this very word has the power to soften her heart tomorrow!

As we preach God's word, there is both an outer and an inner revelation. We preach God's word to the human person from without. But God's Spirit works through this word, when, where, and how he pleases, to convict the heart within. Thus, Jesus' parable is diagnostic of present reality but not determinative of future reality. This should make us bold to preach!