

Worship Companion for July 26, 2026

(We are worshipping outdoors today, so zoom isn't an option. But we encourage you to find a quiet moment, and spend some time with this week's Gospel reading on some parables of Jesus. Click on the links in the titles to hear music.)

HYMN [Morning Has Broken](#)

Morning has broken like the first morning,
blackbird has spoken like the first bird.
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!
Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word!

Mine is the sunlight! Mine is the morning
born of the one light Eden saw play!
Praise with elation, praise every morning,
God's recreation of the new day!

OPENING PRAYER

Holy One, Presence in the Commonplace,
We praise you for the beauty of everyday things.
We thank you for the morning coffee and the warmth of the mug.
For the keys that open doors to safety and community.
For the smell of rain on dry pavement and the rhythm of breathing.
These ordinary moments are thick with your grace.
Remind us that your love is baked into daily bread and worn-down paths.
Consecrate our routines and make our mundane spaces holy.
May we move through this week seeing every ordinary object, every routine task, and every neighbor as a spark of your divine life. Amen.

GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 13:31-33,44-52

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

³¹ He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; ³² it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

The Parable of the Yeast

³³ He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

Three Parables

⁴⁴ "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and reburied; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; ⁴⁶ on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

⁴⁷ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; ⁴⁸ when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. ⁴⁹ So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Treasures New and Old

⁵¹ "Have you understood all this?" They answered, "Yes." ⁵² And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

REFLECTIONS

These sayings of Jesus are one of the most common ways that He taught both his disciples and the crowds. Jesus seldom talked directly about morality. Instead, he asked questions and parables to get His audience thinking for themselves. As we hear these parables, we, too, are challenged to reflect on what they might mean for our times, as well as what Jesus

meant for the crowd. Remember that Jesus' disciples were living under the thumb of Rome, and their tradition had taught them to expect a Messiah who would overthrow the Roman empire and install a king from their tribe. Jesus offers a different vision of God's action; subtle changes to the social order that would improve the lives of the poor and marginalized. So then, Jesus talks of nearly invisible seeds that grow into big, untidy bushes, and pearls (an item that most of the audience would never have seen in real life!) found in fields. Read the Scripture again, and reflect on these questions.

1. All of these sayings are in answer to the question "What will this Kingdom of God be like?" What kind of vision do you think Jesus had for the world?
2. One of the common elements in these parables is the hidden nature of God's work in the world. Where do you see God working?
3. Which of these parables spoke to you most directly?
4. In every generation, people of faith have read these parables and come to different understandings of what they mean. Let them resonate with you this week !

HYMN [*All Things Bright and Beautiful*](#)

Refrain:

*All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all.*

Each little flow'r that opens, each little bird that sings,
God made their glowing colors, God made their tiny wings. [Refrain]

The purple-headed mountain, the river running by,
the sunset and the morning that brightens up the sky. [Refrain]

PRAYER *Spend a few minutes in prayer, ending with the Lord's Prayer:*

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

BLESSING [*God Now in Peace*](#)

Go now in peace, go now in peace.
May the love of God surround you,
Everywhere, everywhere, you shall go.