

11th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year B

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Sources:

- SCB: ([St Charles](#))
- SH: ([Scott Hahn](#))
- JP03: ([JP03 on Psalms 92](#) – 9/3/03)

1st Reading - Ezekiel 17:22-24 - Thus says the Lord GOD: I, too, will pluck from the crest of the cedar the highest branch. From the top a tender shoot I will break off and transplant on a high, lofty mountain. On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it. It shall put forth branches and bear fruit, and become a majestic cedar. Every small bird will nest under it, all kinds of winged birds will dwell in the shade of its branches. Every tree of the field will know that I am the LORD. I bring low the high tree, lift high the lowly tree, Wither up the green tree, and make the dry tree bloom. As I, the LORD, have spoken, so will I do!

SH:

- The tree is the Cross, on the hill of Calvary, and the fruit is salvation.
- “birds of every kind” (gentiles). “Take wing” (in the new life of Christ).

SCB:

- 600 BC – Daniel and Ezekiel. Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar. Judah was taken.
- Ezekiel = “God strengthens. He was a priest.
- Exiles were allowed to take their possessions and live in homes. But they were captive. There was no temple.
- Ezekiel became prophetic four years after Judah was taken captive.
- Yahweh had decreed the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple and the dispersion of the people of Judah.
- Ezekiel had to drive home the all-important truth that the people were not suffering for the sins of their forefathers, but for their own sinfulness. If a man truly repents, he will be saved.
- The tender shoot represents a future king from the house of David (2 Samuel 7:13). Nazareth (from *nezer*, meaning shoot or branch) is the shoot of Jesse (Isaiah 15:1). Jesse was the father of King David.
- The birds hearken back to the story of Noah’s ark (Genesis 6:20) where the term is part of the description of all living things.

- The majestic cedar of the preceding verse is the symbol of the royal house of Judah. If this majestic cedar is the King of Judah, the “trees of the field” are the surrounding kings and they will know that God humbles the mighty and raises up a new power from nothing. God brings up a new king of the Jews to rescue them from the lowly state of punishment to which Judah has fallen. The cedar is the messianic tree of David.

Psalms 92:2-3, 13-14, 15-16

It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praise to your name, Most High, to proclaim your kindness at dawn and your faithfulness throughout the night.

The just one shall flourish like the palm tree, like a cedar of Lebanon shall he grow. They that are planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God.

They shall bear fruit even in old age; vigorous and sturdy shall they be, declaring how just is the LORD, my rock, in whom there is no wrong.

SH:

- our expression of gratitude to God.
- flourishing trees = loves of the just.

SCB:

- growth also occurs in each soul. To allow the mercy of God to exalt us, to make us grow, we must make ourselves small, humble. (Cedars of Lebanon)

JP03:

- The hymn opens with a general appeal to celebrate and praise the Lord in music and song. It seems to be a never-ending stream of prayer, for divine love must be exalted in the morning when the day begins, but it must also be declared during the day and through the hours of the night.
- God loves a cheerful giver (II Cor 9: 7).
- Whatever you do, do it joyfully. Then you will be doing good and doing it well.
- Psalm 92 thus is replete with happiness, confidence and optimism: gifts that we must ask God for precisely in our time when the temptation of distrust and even despair can easily creep in.
- At the end, in the atmosphere of profound peace that permeates it, our hymn casts a glance at the old age of the righteous and predicts that they will be equally serene. Even when these days loom on his horizon, the spirit of the praying person will still be vital, happy and active, and feel flourishing and fruitful like the palms and cedars planted in the courtyards of the temple of Zion.

2nd Reading - 2 Corinthians 5:6-10 - So we are always courageous, although we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yet we are courageous, and we would rather leave the body and go home to the Lord. Therefore, we aspire to please him, whether we are at home or away. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive recompense, according to what he did in the body, whether good or evil.

SH:

- faith and courage.

SCB:

- St Paul teaches about our heavenly dwelling which is our ultimate destination and how we are to work to achieve it.
- This earthly tent we occupy is not our home; our home is in heaven. We are just passing through this place. We are shown in other places (Acts 16:16-40; 22:22-29; Romans 13:1-7; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13; Ephesians 4:28) that just because we are not “with the Lord” now, doesn’t mean that we shouldn’t concern ourselves with building up the earthly city.
- Our faith is the light which shows us the way as we progress toward eternal life.
- Here we see Saint Paul’s conviction that he will meet the Lord when he dies (Philippians 1:21-23). When we reach our home in heaven, we will no longer need the light of faith, because God Himself and Jesus the Christ will be our light (Revelation 21:23).
- Souls will receive their eternal reward or punishment immediately after death – or after they pass through purgatory, if they have to do so. The reward or punishment, given at the particular judgment and ratified at the general judgment at the end of time, is based on a person’s merits gained during his life on earth. Once he has died, he can no longer merit. Saint Paul is pleading with us to do everything we can in this life to please the Lord.

Gospel - Mark 4:26-34 - He said, “This is how it is with the kingdom of God; it is as if a man were to scatter seed on the land and would sleep and rise night and day and the seed would sprout and grow, he knows not how. Of its own accord the land yields fruit, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. And when the grain is ripe, he wields the sickle at once, for the harvest has come.” He said, “To what shall we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable can we use for it? It is like a mustard seed that, when it is sown in the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth. But once it is sown, it springs up and becomes the largest of plants and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the sky can dwell in its shade.” With many such parables he spoke the word to them as they were able to understand it. Without parables he did not speak to them, but to his own disciples he explained everything in private.

SH:

- Ezekiel foretold the smallest seed growing into a huge tree, providing shade and rest for the birds of the sky.

SCB:

- Jesus is telling His disciples about His Church: The preaching of the gospel (the generously scattered seed) will unfailingly yield its fruit, independent of who sows or reaps – it is God who gives the growth (1 Corinthians 3:5-9).
- God silently works a transformation in each one of us causing us to make resolutions which shape our soul. We resolve to be faithful, surrender ourselves, respond to grace. Our callings and responses may be different as we are individuals (Ephesians 4:11-13). Even though we must make the decision to become a follower of Christ, it is the Holy Spirit who, working within us, gives a supernatural tone to our thoughts, desires and actions.
- The main meaning of this parable has to do with the contrast between the great and the small. The seed of the Kingdom of God on earth is something very tiny to begin with (Luke 12:32; Acts 1:19); but it will grow to be a big tree. The seed is planted in Peter and the apostles, has set its roots in Rome, and has grown to be a big tree; one which encompasses the whole world; a great multitude which “no man can number” (Revelation 7:9).