

# THE HOPE JOURNAL

LEARNING TO LOVE, TOGETHER

JULY 30, 2023



## DESIRE

*my dreams or our dreams*

by Drew Downs

There are dreams that I dream for myself.  
And dreams I dream for all of us.

There are dreams we dream for ourselves.  
And dreams we dream for all of us.

Then there are dreams we dream together.  
Those are almost always dreams for all of us.

Often, we talk about following our dreams.  
Which are almost always a solitary pursuit.

This often wreaks havoc on couples, families,  
or friendships. Because solo dreams tend to  
be a pretty solitary pursuit.

Community dreams are a bit more difficult,  
though. We have to decide, coordinate, and  
do things together. They take much more  
planning. But we can also do way more.

Community dreaming ensures a better  
chance of making all of our dreams come  
true.

# ORDINARY TIME

2023

## WHAT'S GOING ON

*"You know we've got to find a way  
To bring some loving here today".*

-Marvin Gaye

Disciples, Apostles, and Saints!

**Courage**

Following Jesus is often cast as a question of doing the right thing or following the rules. Which is kind of funny when we go looking for all of those rules Jesus has given us to follow. A list that is something like:

- Love God with everything you've got.
- And love your neighbor as yourself.

and that's about it.

Rather than spend time listing all of the specific things we are supposed to be doing, what Jesus actually spends time on is inviting courage and urgency.

The underlying character of Jesus's teaching is not rule-following. He invites us to join in building something bigger than ourselves and more powerful than anything we can imagine.

Jesus invites us to show courage precisely because it isn't about you or me or anything we ourselves are capable of doing. It isn't about our capacity. It is entirely based on the limitless capacity of God. And we're merely invited to show up.

[This is part 5 of our summer series on apostleship. The series is loosely based on the lectionary.]

With love,  
Drew

# ORDINARY TIME

2023

## FOR SUNDAY

*Ninth Sunday after Pentecost*

July 30, 2023

### **Collect**

O God, the protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: Increase and multiply upon us your mercy; that, with you as our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we lose not the things eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

### **Reading**

Matthew 13:31-33,44-52

Jesus put before the crowds another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; 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."

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."

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

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

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

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

# PENTECOST

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## Reflection

Jesus compares the Kin-dom to a mustard seed, yeast, treasure, pearls, and a net. The diversity of images is far more fascinating than any one, I suspect.

We're familiar with the mustard seed. Familiarity, of course, breeds contempt. And laziness. The treasure and pearl are obvious. Yeast, sure. It goes along with the mustard seed.

But that net image. That seems...different somehow. The others demonstrate that power and scope on the one hand and the precious, desirable quality on the other. But this is something different. It is a tool. A way of gathering what is itself desirable.

What the whole lot of these strikes me with is a demand for urgency and an expectation of agency. That Jesus invites us to tap into the thing we want most, need more than anything, and find ourselves most obsessed with day-to-day: health and happiness right now and forever.

We all want these things. If we have the means, we go to school to maximize the opportunity to have these things. If we don't have the means, we work to obtain the means to have these things. And not *things*, so much as the safety and security and joy that comes with not *worrying* about things in general.

There's a threshold in the happiness research about how much income affects happiness. It happens to be the income level in which you generally don't think about whether or not you can afford to eat this week. In other words, you don't have to check the bank account before buying groceries.

These images for the Kin-dom reflect this vision of desire, this motivation to have it for ourselves, and therefore, the willingness to make this happiness for everyone around us. Because the Kin-dom means we all eat. So none of us worries about it.

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