

Sunday, July 26, 2026 - Meditation

Even a casual reading of Genesis will make you wonder why we call it the "holy" Bible. Many of the stories there don't feel very holy at all. Today's reading is no exception. Jacob and Laban are negotiating over Laban's two daughters. Jacob wants Rachel as his wife, but instead Laban sends Leah on their wedding night. Is this the story of God keeping his covenant? How can God still bring good out of a situation like this? Can God work through a culture that treats women like chattel? Through a father-in-law who deceives his son-in-law into marrying the wrong daughter? This isn't the first or last time deception shows up in Scripture. Do you remember how Jacob tricked his brother, Esau, out of his inheritance? So, now Jacob is getting a taste of his own medicine you might say. Still, how do we see the hand of God here?

We might wonder how God is able to work through such people. How God can keep his covenant, his promises,

even among such sinful people and the cultures in which they live. But the Psalm we read today says, absolutely, He can.

“He has always been mindful of his covenant,
the promise he made for a thousand generations:
The covenant he made with Abraham,
the oath that he swore to Isaac,
Which he established as a statute for Jacob,
an everlasting covenant for Israel.

At first glance it's hard to see. If you only look at the temporal, the earthly - at humanity in all its fallenness, at disasters of our own making, natural disasters, the suffering all around - where IS the Kingdom of God? How mindful of his covenant has God really been?

The collect printed in the insert points us in the right direction: "With you as our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we lose not the things eternal." The assumption is that we can move through this

world and lose sight of the eternal. But with God as our ruler and guide, we can hold onto them.

Sometimes we forget that what we have put our faith and hope in is invisible. It's hidden. This is what Jesus says in the Gospel today. The Kingdom of Heaven is like "a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field." "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour." "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field." "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls."

Each of these parables compares the Kingdom to something invisible, something small, something you can't see or see very easily. A mustard seed sown in a field. Yeast that's been mixed in with the flour. Treasure hidden in a field. A pearl tucked inside a mollusk.

What does that mean to us? That God's Kingdom - God's rule or presence on earth – is here but in seed form. It

hasn't yet grown into the greatest of shrubs. It hasn't yet become a tree. The yeast has been mixed into the dough it hasn't yet risen.

But, that is where our hope lies – in the Kingdom of Heaven not yet come. The Psalm says God has always been mindful of his covenant.

In Paul's letter to the Romans, we're reminded that for those who hold on to his promises, he has given us his Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the presence of his Kingdom in each of us. It's his presence in seed form. It is his Spirit who enables us to pass through things temporal without losing the things eternal, who assures us God can work through people like Jacob and Laban, or sinners like you and me.

Paul writes, "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God,

who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God." The Holy Spirit who is the mustard seed planted in us, the yeast mixed into our dough, the treasure hidden in our hearts, is the eternal at work in the temporal.