

TODAY WE DO NOT HAVE A SPECCIAL FEASTDAY.

IN A SENSE WE DON'T EVEN HAVE A SPECIAL SEASON: THE SEASON OF EASTER IS OVER.

WE BEGIN, FOR A WHILE, THE COLOR GREEN TO REPRESENT ORDINARY TIME.

AND EACH SUNDAY, THE READINGS WILL HAVE THEIR OWN FOCUS,

THEIR OWN THEME.

THIS IS A TIME FOR REFLECTING ON THE MANY DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF JESUS,

THE KINGDDOM OF GOD AS WELL AS OUR OWN DISCIPLESHIP.

DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES, EACH WEEK ON WHAT IT MEANS TO BE PART SOMETHING LARGER

THAN OURSELVES.

AND IT'S A TIME FOR REFLECTING AND GROWING IN OUR FAITH.

AND TODAY'S READINGS START US OFF BY REMINDING US OF THAT GROWTH THROUGH

THE IMAGE OF NATURE.

IN TODAY'S READINGS,

WE DO NOT HAVE A CENTRAL CHARACTER.

NO ONE IS TRYING TO TRAP JESUS IN HIS SPEECH.

NO ONE IS LOOKING FOR HEALING.

BUT THEY ARE LISTENING TO HIM AS HE TEACHES ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

AND IT'S NOT AN EASY TOPIC.

THE KINGDOM IS SO BROAD AND HAS SO MANY DIFFERENT THINGS ABOUT IT THAT

ARE MYSTERIOUS TO US.

THERE IS THE KINGDOM THAT IS FOUND IN HEAVEN.

AND THERE IS THE KINGDOM THAT EXISTS ON EARTH IN THE HEARTS OF BELIEVERS.

BUT THE READINGS DO TELL US ABOUT HOW GOD VIEWS HIS PEOPLE IN THE KINGDOM THAT BELONGS TO HIM.

AND HE TELLS US ABOUT OURSELVES AND OUR OWN LIVES.

IN OUR FIRST READING WE ARE TOLD THAT BASICALLY GOD WILL DO WHATEVER IS NECESSARY TO GIVE US FULLNESS OF LIFE WITH HIM.

WE RECEIVE THAT KNOWLEDGE FROM THE IMAGES WE'RE GIVEN OF THE TREES THAT ARE ALL AT DIFFERENT POINTS IN DEVELOPMENT.

AND WE ARE TOLD THAT HE WILL CHANGE THEM ALL IN WHATEVER WAY IS NEEDED.

IF WE ARE LOOKING FOR QUICK ANSWERS TO THE MEANING OF GOD,

OR MEANING IN OUR LIFE OR LOOKING FOR QUICK ANSWERS AND SOLUTIONS

TO THE PROBLEMS WE FACE,

THEN WE MAY BE DISAPPOINTED.

THINGS HAPPEN IN GOD'S OWN TIME AND WHEN THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN.

THAT'S FROM THE IMAGE OF THE FARMER,

WHO PLANTS THE FIELD AND TAKES CARE OF IT DAY AFTER DAY.

AND IN A SENSE THE GROWTH IS SLOW.

HE CAN'T SEE IT GET TALLER ALL AT ONCE.

HE CANNOT SEE THAT IT IS GROWING BY LOOKING AT IT FOR A FEW MINUTES.

BUT IT DOES HAPPEN AND IN TIME THE FARMER IS REWARDED FOR HIS EFFORTS,

FOR HIS TRUST AND FOR HIS FAITHFULNESS TO THE TASK.

AND IN GOD'S KINGDOM THERE IS A PLACE FOR EVERYONE.

THAT COMES TO US FROM THE IMAGE OF THE MUSTARD SEED.

IT'S ONE OF THE SMALLEST OF SEEDS,

BUT IT GROWS INTO A LARGE PLANT.

SOME WOULD LOOK AT IT IN IT'S ORIGIN AND THINK THAT IT'S UNREMARKABLE.

IT WOULD APPEAR IN SIGNIFICANT.

BUT THE FINAL PRODUCT IS SOMETHING WORTH WAITING FOR.

IN GOD'S KINGDDOM,

ALL PEOPLE ARE PRECIOUS AND ALL PEOPLE HAVE THEIR PLACE.

IN OUR HUMANITY,

WE MAY FEEL SMALL AND LIMITED IN WHAT WE CAN ACCOMPLISH.

WE MAY FEEL INSIGNIFICANT.

BUT WITH GOD'S GRACE WE ARE MOLDED INTO SOMETHING THAT IS GREAT AND MIGHTY

IN HOLINESS AS PART OF GOD'S CREATION.

THE GROWTH OF THE MUSTARD SEED FROM THE MOMENT OF BEING PLANTED,

TO IT'S BUDDING,

UNTIL IT REACHES FULL MATURITY IS INEVITABLE.

AND FOR US, IT IS GOD'S WILL AND GOD'S PLAN,

JUST AS IT UNFOLDS IN NATURE,

THAT WE CAN FIND HIM, FIND OUR ANSWERS AND FIND WHAT TRUE GREATNESS IS.