

## **Scripture for the Sixth Sunday after Pentecost, July 12, 2020**

### **Introduction to the Gospel Lesson: Matthew 13:1-9 & 18-23**

At the beginning of chapter 13 of Matthew's gospel, it says, "At about the same time Jesus left the house and sat on the beach." Left what house? You might ask. In chapter 12, we find Jesus in several different places: In the grainfields in the region of Capernaum; the synagogue in the community; and then to someone's house where he did some healings. Listen now to more of the story from the gospel of Matthew from "The Message," chapter 13, verses 1-9 and then 18-23

### **A Reading from Matthew 13:1-9 & 18-23 (The Message) A Harvest Story**

**13** <sup>1-3</sup> At about that same time Jesus left the house and sat on the beach. In no time at all a crowd gathered along the shoreline, forcing him to get into a boat. Using the boat as a pulpit, he addressed his congregation, telling stories. <sup>3-8</sup> "What do you make of this? A farmer planted seed. As he scattered the seed, some of it fell on the road, and birds ate it. Some fell in the gravel; it sprouted quickly but didn't put down roots, so when the sun came up it withered just as quickly. Some fell in the weeds; as it came up, it was strangled by the weeds. Some fell on good earth, and produced a harvest beyond his wildest dreams.

<sup>9</sup> "Are you listening to this? Really listening?"

### **The Meaning of the Harvest Story**

<sup>18-19</sup> "Study this story of the farmer planting seed. When anyone hears news of the kingdom and doesn't take it in, it just remains on the surface, and so the Evil One comes along and plucks it right out of that person's heart. This is the seed the farmer scatters on the road.

<sup>20-21</sup> "The seed cast in the gravel—this is the person who hears and instantly responds with enthusiasm. But there is no soil of character, and so when the emotions wear off and some difficulty arrives, there is nothing to show for it.

<sup>22</sup> "The seed cast in the weeds is the person who hears the kingdom news, but weeds of worry and illusions about getting more and wanting everything under the sun strangle what was heard, and nothing comes of it.

<sup>23</sup> "The seed cast on good earth is the person who hears and takes in the News, and then produces a harvest beyond his wildest dreams."