

FAITH COMES BY HEARING Bible Study – 6.12.24 (for 6.16.24)

FIRST READING: Ezekiel 17:22-24

22 Thus says the Lord God: “I myself will take a sprig from the lofty top of the cedar and will set it out. I will break off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one, and I myself will plant it on a high and lofty mountain. 23 On the mountain height of Israel will I plant it, that it may bear branches and produce fruit and become a

noble cedar. And under it will dwell every kind of bird; in the shade of its branches birds of every sort will nest. 24 And all the trees of the field shall know that I am the Lord; I bring low the high tree, and make high the low tree, dry up the green tree, and make the dry tree flourish. I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will do it.”

- 1) Tree imagery throughout the Scriptures is correlated to royalty. What is God showing us through these words?
- 2) The people had been placing their hope in foreign entities, and it was disappointing them. How are God’s words here redirect the people?
- 3) What do we notice about God’s heart and His plans in these words?

Second Reading: Acts 28:17-31

17 After three days he called together the local leaders of the Jews, and when they had gathered, he said to them, “Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. 18 When they had examined me, they wished to set me at liberty, because there was no reason for the death penalty in my case. 19 But because the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar—though I had no charge to bring against my nation. 20 For this reason, therefore, I have asked to see you and speak with you, since it is because of the hope of Israel that I am wearing this chain.” 21 And they said to him, “We have received no letters from Judea about you, and none of the brothers coming here has reported or spoken any evil about you. 22 But we desire to hear

from you what your views are, for with regard to this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against.”

23 When they had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. 24 And some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved. 25 And disagreeing among themselves, they departed after Paul had made one statement: “The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet:

26 “Go to this people, and say, “You will indeed hear but never understand,

and you will indeed see but never perceive.” 27 For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.’

28 Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen.” 30 He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, 31 proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

- 1) Paul arrives in Rome to defend the Gospel, which many Jewish people consider “the ends of the earth.” How does this correspond to Jesus’ words in Acts 1:8?
- 2) Why does Paul summon and speak to the Jewish leaders first?
- 3) Paul’s opportunity in Rome lasts a good while. What do we note about his ministry there, and about the Gospel?

GOSPEL: Mark 4:30-32

30 And he said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? 31 It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the

seeds on earth, 32 yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”

- 1) In this passage (just as we saw in Ezekiel and in the book of Acts), what happens under God’s watchful eyes?
- 2) What is provided to others through this development?
- 3) How should this make us consider our “small things” when placed in the hands of a big God? What are your “small things” you need to entrust to Him?