

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

JULY 16, 2017



THE LESSON Genesis 25:19-34

¹⁹These are the descendants of Isaac, Abraham's son. Abraham became the father of Isaac. ²⁰Isaac was 40 years old when he married Rebekah the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean and the sister of Laban the Aramean, from Paddan-aram. ²¹Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife, since she was unable to have children. The LORD was moved by his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. ²²But the boys pushed against each other inside of her, and she said, "If this is what it's like, why did it happen to me?"

So she went to ask the LORD. ²³And the LORD said to her,

"Two nations are in your womb; two different peoples will emerge from your body. One people will be stronger than the other; the older will serve the younger."

²⁴When she reached the end of her pregnancy, she discovered that she had twins. ²⁵The first came out red all over, clothed with hair, and

she named him Esau. ²⁶Immediately afterward, his brother came out gripping Esau's heel, and she named him Jacob. Isaac was 60 years old when they were born.

²⁷When the young men grew up, Esau became an outdoorsman who knew how to hunt, and Jacob became a quiet man who stayed at home. ²⁸Isaac loved Esau because he enjoyed eating game, but Rebekah loved Jacob. ²⁹Once when Jacob was boiling stew, Esau came in from the field hungry ³⁰and said to Jacob, "I'm starving! Let me devour some of this red stuff." That's why his name is Edom.

³¹Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright today."

³²Esau said, "Since I'm going to die anyway, what good is my birthright to me?"

³³Jacob said, "Give me your word today." And he did. He sold his birthright to Jacob. ³⁴So Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew. He ate, drank, got up, and left, showing just how little he thought of his birthright.

THE RESPONSE Psalm 119:105-112

¹⁰⁵Your word is a lamp before my feet and a light for my journey.

¹⁰⁶**I have sworn, and I fully mean it: I will keep your righteous rules.**

¹⁰⁷I have been suffering so much—LORD, make me live again according to your promise.

¹⁰⁸**Please, LORD, accept my spontaneous gifts of praise. Teach me your rules!**

¹⁰⁹Though my life is constantly in danger, I won't forget your Instruction.

¹¹⁰Though the wicked have set a trap for me, I won't stray from your precepts.

¹¹¹Your laws are my possession forever because they are my heart's joy.

¹¹²I have decided to keep your statutes forever, every last one.

THE EPISTLE Romans 8:1-11

¹So now there isn't any condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ²The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death. ³God has done what was impossible for the Law, since it was weak because of selfishness. God condemned sin in the body by sending his own Son to deal with sin in the same body as humans, who are controlled by sin. ⁴He did this so that the righteous requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us. Now the way we live is based on the Spirit, not based on selfishness. ⁵People whose lives are based on selfishness think about selfish things, but people whose lives are based on the Spirit think about things that are related to the Spirit. ⁶The attitude that comes from

selfishness leads to death, but the attitude that comes from the Spirit leads to life and peace. ⁷So the attitude that comes from selfishness is hostile to God. It doesn't submit to God's Law, because it can't. ⁸People who are self-centered aren't able to please God.

⁹But you aren't self-centered. Instead you are in the Spirit, if in fact God's Spirit lives in you. If anyone doesn't have the Spirit of Christ, they don't belong to him. ¹⁰If Christ is in you, the Spirit is your life because of God's righteousness, but the body is dead because of sin. ¹¹If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your human bodies also, through his Spirit that lives in you.

THE GOSPEL Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

¹That day Jesus went out of the house and sat down beside the lake. ²Such large crowds gathered around him that he climbed into a boat and sat down. The whole crowd was standing on the shore.

³He said many things to them in parables: "A farmer went out to scatter seed. ⁴As he was scattering seed, some fell on the path, and birds came and ate it. ⁵Other seed fell on rocky ground where the soil was shallow. They sprouted immediately because

the soil wasn't deep. ⁶But when the sun came up, it scorched the plants, and they dried up because they had no roots. ⁷Other seed fell among thorny plants. The thorny plants grew and choked them. ⁸Other seed fell on good soil and bore fruit, in one case a yield of one hundred to one, in another case a yield of sixty to one, and in another case a yield of thirty to one. ⁹Everyone who has ears should pay attention." . . .

¹⁸"Consider then the parable of the farmer. ¹⁹Whenever people hear the word about the kingdom

and don't understand it, the evil one comes and carries off what was planted in their hearts. This is the seed that was sown on the path. ²⁰As for the seed that was spread on rocky ground, this refers to people who hear the word and immediately receive it joyfully. ²¹Because they have no roots, they last for only a little while. When they experience distress or abuse because of the word, they immediately fall away. ²²As for the seed that was spread

among thorny plants, this refers to those who hear the word, but the worries of this life and the false appeal of wealth choke the word, and it bears no fruit. ²³As for what was planted on good soil, this refers to those who hear and understand, and bear fruit and produce—in one case a yield of one hundred to one, in another case a yield of sixty to one, and in another case a yield of thirty to one."