BIBLE STUDY
June 10 and 13, 2024

<u>THE ELEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME</u>
Ezekiel 17: 23-24
Mark 4: 26-34
2 Corinthians 5: 6-10

1. **Ezekiel 17: 22-24**
    - **17: 1-10:** the Lord tells Ezekiel to tell this allegory to the people. An eagle takes the top of a cedar tree from Lebanon and plants it in a foreign land. The tree begins to flourish and spread its vines and branches to the one who planted it. Another eagle takes the vine and transplants it. Can it survive? Will not the first one who transplanted it destroy it and take it away from the second one?
    - **17: 12-22:** The meaning of the allegory is that Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, deposed Jehoiachin from the kingship of Israel and deported him and the people to Babylon. He placed Jehoiachin's uncle, Zedekiah on the throne and forced an oath of loyalty from him. Zedekiah was persuaded to rebel and make an alliance with the Pharoah Hophra of Egypt. Therefore, he deserves punishment because he was unfaithful. Ezekiel taught that the people had brought down the punishment of exile on themselves and that they should accept it and let God retore them. Zedekiah's alliance with Pharoah was also a rebellion against God.
    - **V.** 23: The Lord will restore Israel. He will transplant the cedar tree from Babylon and return it to Israel. It will flourish. Ezekiel taught that the Lord would restore a faithful remnant of Israel who would be try to the covenant and within whom he would put a new spirit and a new life. The birds that nest in this tree are the nations of the earth that will find refuge in the Lord.
    - **V.** 24: All the nations will know the power of the Lord. The casts the might down and lifts the lowly. He makes the green tree whither and the dry tree to bloom. Isarel should wait for the Lord to redeem them.
2. **Mark 4: 26-34**
    - Jesus teaches by making us of parables or riddle like stories that explain the Kingdom of God. Those in the crowd who have converted hearts and listen and understand. The others are left in the dark. Jesus explains things clearly to the disciples. This might be an attempt o explain why some believed and others did not.
    - **V. 26-29:** The Parable of the Seed Growing Secretly uses the image of a seed that is planted and then mysteriously grows without the farmer doing anything until it is tile for harvest. The parable teaches that although we do not see lots of activity, the seed is growing. The Kingdom of God may not show lots of activity and development after the planting of the seed by Jesus' preaching, but there is growth and activity, nonetheless. We do not see the actions of God, but he is always at work.

- **V. 30-31:** The Parable of the Mustard Seed compares the small beginning with the big ending of the tiniest seed that becomes the largest of shrubs. The Kingdom of God may start out small, but it will end up big. We should never minimize or discount small beginnings, they can lead to great results.
- **V. 32:** The birds nesting in the branches are a reference to Ezekiel. The birds are symbols of all the nations that will be drawn to the Kingdom of God. The migrant character of the birds may also refer to the Kingdom of God giving a home to the excluded and the marginalized.

3. **2 Corinthians 5: 6-10**
    - **V. 6:** We are destined to live the resurrected life. The Spirit that we receive at Baptism is the promise and first down payment on the new life. We experience a tension between the present and the future. We desire to be with Christ in the fullness of the resurrection, but we are still in the body here on earth. If we are in the body, we are away from the Lord.
    - **V. 7:** During this in between time, we walk by faith and not by sight. We trust in the promises of the Lord. Faith is trust that what said, he will do.
    - **V. 8:** Our preference is to be with the Lord, but we continue to live on the earth according to God's will. It takes courage for us to persevere.
    - **V. 9:** Whether we are away from the Lord or with him, our desire is to do what he wants and to please him.
    - V. 10: We know that we will have to give an accounting of ourselves before the Lord on the day of judgement. Therefore, we are careful to do what the Lord asks of us now.