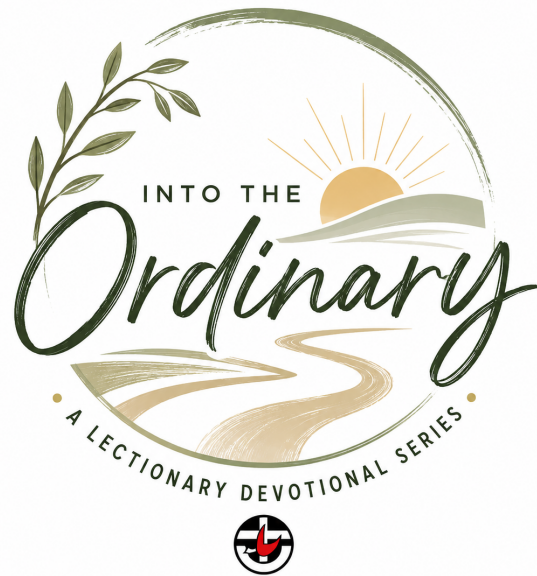




Ordinary Time

Lectionary reflections for 26th July - Pentecost 9

Genesis 29:15-28; Psalm 105:1-11,45b; Romans 8:26-39;
Matthew 13:31-33,44

As the grey weariness
of winter starts
to settle within us,
July's readings call us
gently into the
kin(g)dom life of
sharing burdens,
cultivating "good"
ground, practising
neighbourly care, and
trusting in God's slow
and subtle
transformation.
JULY:
GROUNDING

Even as Psalm 105 celebrates a God who keeps covenant love alive across generations and Romans reaches its climax with the assurance that no power can separate us from the love of God, Jacob's love for Rachel becomes the hook for a complex plot of unfair labour, deception, and patriarchal bargaining with his uncle, Laban. Genesis 29 is an uncomfortable reminder of how frequently women can become currency and work can become exploitative. What does covenantal faithfulness look like amidst distorted power? How is Paul's promise realised during suffering and insecurity?

Jesus' parables offer disproportion as a key: small beginnings become sheltering growth, a little yeast transforms the whole, a hidden treasure and a single pearl are worth everything, one net thrown into the sea catches fish of every kind.

In their light, covenantal faithfulness is the disproportionate practice of steadfast love within our small acts that refuse exploitation, protect dignity, keep making room for life, and, maybe most importantly, reorder what we value, desire, support, and prioritise. A little love, these texts encourage, can go a long way.

PrayerPoem



God of mustard seeds and hidden yeast,
 your reign works quietly -
 in dough, in dirt, in the ordinary hours
 when we think nothing is changing.
 Teach us to trust small beginnings.
 In households like Jacob's,
 where bargains and power bend love out of shape,
 be the covenant-keeper.
 Hold us when we do not hold each other well.
 Spirit, pray in us when words fail.
 When creation groans, when we are tired of hoping,
 when fear whispers abandonment,
 say again what Romans sings:
 nothing can separate us from your love. NOTHING.

Jesus, you tell of treasure in a field,
 of a pearl worth everything,
 of nets pulled heavy with life.
 So train our desire:
 help us recognise what is worth the risk,
 what is worth the selling,
 what is worth the re-ordering of our lives.
 Make us a people who refuse to abandon—
 you, neighbour, ourselves.
 Leaven us into communities of fierce tenderness,
 where joy is not denial but deep courage.
 And let our discipleship be yeast-work:
 unseen, faithful, transforming the whole loaf until
 everyone has bread.