

Sermon for 12 July 2026 @ Bethesda UMC/Baltimore

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

Scriptures: Genesis 25:19-34; Psalter (*Insert, alternate* leader/**people**) Psalm 119:105-112; Romans 8:1-11; Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

Sermon: What in the world are we talking about?

Isaac loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob? Aren't parents supposed to love all their children equally?

I'm supposed to give up everything to follow God. Well, if that's so, why does God set things up to tempt us so? Is that what a loving parent does? Seems unfair to me.

Then here comes Paul, after the Jewish religion is well-established, hundreds of years old, and against his will Paul gets converted to the Christian faith and spends the rest of his life knocking himself out to prove it's better than Judaism.

And here comes Jesus, talking about lucky seed and unlucky seed, and only the lucky sprouts and grows, some 100 times, some sixty.

Doesn't it all sound like a set-up, with only the lucky ones of us succeeding and living good, happy lives and finally dying and going to heaven?

This business of "Ordinary Time," most of the church year, not the big holidays but the serious business that proves what's real and what isn't, with some of us on the right side and the rest of the world left out, dying permanently, good for nothing after all...Is that what it's really all about, no matter how noisy Christmas and Easter and Lent and all the big and little holidays seem?

If that's our religion, I don't want it. No wonder it's dying out at last. It stands for division, win over losing, good guys and bad guys, you'd better figure it out and get going and stay with God. Let the rest go. My side versus yours.

That's the risk Take it or leave it.

How much of the whole show plays like that? Are we always picking sides? Is that the sum of things?

Let us pray. Lord, save us from living and believing that way. It comes so naturally to us. We take you for a divider, picking and choosing among us, judging, and washing your hands of the rest of us!

Teach us, Jesus! Show us you're after saving all of us, never giving up on any of us. That's your point; dying with the weak ones and mean ones and the unlucky ones...

Show us, over and over and day in and day out, that your spirit is in all of us, that nothing can defeat you, you will never give up trying, and you will win in all the religions and no matter how much or how little of all of them we belong to! Show us love, again and again, young folks and old folk, from start to finish of everything. There's only one way, and it's your way, you are in charge. It's beautiful, and we can be with you and like you... soon or late, but always and forever. You are the sum of it all, and mercy matters, always, even for parents, forever, and for love...Amen.