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**Fourth Sunday after Pentecost  
June 17, 2018**

## **Prayer of the Day**

*O God, you are the tree of life, offering shelter to all the world. Graft us into yourself and nurture our growth, that we may bear your truth and love to those in need, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.*

## **First Reading Ezekiel 17:22-24**

Thus says the Lord GOD:  
I myself will take a sprig  
from the lofty top of a cedar;  
I will set it out.  
I will break off a tender one  
from the topmost of its young twigs;  
I myself will plant it  
on a high and lofty mountain.  
<sup>23</sup> On the mountain height of Israel  
I will plant it,  
in order that it may produce boughs and bear fruit,  
and become a noble cedar.  
Under it every kind of bird will live;  
in the shade of its branches will nest  
winged creatures of every kind.  
<sup>24</sup> All the trees of the field shall know  
that I am the LORD.  
I bring low the high tree,  
I make high the low tree;  
I dry up the green tree  
and make the dry tree flourish.  
I the LORD have spoken;  
I will accomplish it.

## **Psalm**

### **Psalm 92:1-4, 12-15 (12)**

A Psalm. A Song for the Sabbath Day.

<sup>1</sup> It is good to give thanks to the LORD,  
to sing praises to your name, O Most High;

<sup>2</sup> to declare your steadfast love in the morning,

and your faithfulness by night,  
<sup>3</sup> to the music of the lute and the harp,  
to the melody of the lyre.  
<sup>4</sup> For you, O LORD, have made me glad by your work;  
at the works of your hands I sing for joy.

<sup>12</sup> The righteous flourish like the palm tree,  
and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.  
<sup>13</sup> They are planted in the house of the LORD;  
they flourish in the courts of our God.  
<sup>14</sup> In old age they still produce fruit;  
they are always green and full of sap,  
<sup>15</sup> showing that the LORD is upright;  
he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.  
<sup>12</sup> The righteous flourish like the palm tree,  
and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

## **Second Reading**

### **2 Corinthians 5:6-10 [11-13] 14-17**

So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord—<sup>7</sup>for we walk by faith, not by sight. <sup>8</sup>Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. <sup>9</sup>So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. <sup>10</sup>For all of us must appear before the judgement seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.[

<sup>11</sup> Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade others; but we ourselves are well known to God, and I hope that we are also well known to your consciences. <sup>12</sup>We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you an opportunity to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast in outward appearance and not in the heart. <sup>13</sup>For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you.] <sup>14</sup>For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. <sup>15</sup>And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.

<sup>16</sup> From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. <sup>17</sup>So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

## **Gospel**

### **Mark 4:26-34**

He also said, 'The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, <sup>27</sup>and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. <sup>28</sup>The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then

the full grain in the head. <sup>29</sup>But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.'

30 He also said, 'With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? <sup>31</sup>It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; <sup>32</sup>yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.'

33 With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; <sup>34</sup>he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.