

In our reading today, Jesus is telling us the three parables of growth. The first time I read through the scripture, I didn't really think much about it. We have three stories talking about how great the kingdom of heaven is. And I let it go at that.

We know that our goal in life is to lead a righteous enough life that we will eventually make our way there. So, are these parables just stories that are meant to lead us in a direction to behave? Is it like when we are children and we have to go somewhere that we don't want to, like the doctor, and our parents tell us that if we are good we can go out for ice cream afterwards and then you do. Or is it like you have the same scenario, and you are good at the doctor, but you can't get ice cream because it's closed or it ran too long and you need to get back for some reason. Is heaven the real promise or the keep you in line promise?

Now, I know that heaven is the real promise. And I'm sure that most if not all of the people here believe that as well. But we have the benefit of receiving God's light. We know his love and his wisdom. We celebrate that Jesus has died for us on the cross so that our sins can be forgiven and that we may enter into the kingdom of heaven. But not everyone believes or knows the truth the way that I do.

The last couple of weeks, I have had a number of conversations about baptism and confirmation. I realize that we spoke about Jesus' baptism a couple of weeks ago and this week we are talking about entrance into heaven. But reading these parables made me really think about being baptized and/or confirmed.

In my class this week, I had to write about my baptism. I was to put so much detail in it that the readers felt like they were there with me. Well, I was 2 months old and I do not remember anything from that day. I knew some things about it, but I didn't remember anything. So, I did what every diligent student does, I asked my parents.

Later, Alyssa and I were talking about it. She brought up some questions that some of my classmates asked, because they were baptized later. Alyssa was raised Baptist, so for them baptism is treated more like confirmation.

My classmates and I (as well as some discussion with Alyssa) talked about how baptism is the individual's introduction to christianity and God and they are being baptized without being able to make an informed consent. And for that point, most confirmands don't really have a choice about going to confirmation, so is that right either?

I was thinking about that as I read the third parable. Making bread during Jesus' time isn't like making bread today. When we make bread, we activate the yeast and let it start proofing before we add everything together and start mixing. But, Jesus wouldn't have done it this way.

For his yeast, he would have used a starter, much like we do for sourdough bread. Typically a starter is passed down from someone in the family. So a person wouldn't need to start the dough from scratch. You would take a starter and add flour to it, growing the dough and nurturing it for your bread.

This is like how we develop our faith in God. We don't just wake up one day and decide that we are going to follow God. We need a starter and our parents provide that. By baptizing us at a young age, they start our initial introduction to God and christianity. And then they help us develop and grow, much like the bread. Without that starter, there is no bread.