

19th July 2020 – Morning Service

Rev Michael Payne

Call to Worship

StF 46 Everlasting God, the years go by -

1) Everlasting God,
The years go by but you're unchanging.
In this fragile world,
You are the only firm foundation.
Always loving, always true,
Always merciful and good, so good.

Ch) Yesterday, today and forever,
You are the same, you never change.
Yesterday, today and forever,
You are faithful and we will trust in you.

Ch) Yesterday, today and forever,
You are the same, you never change.
Yesterday, today and forever,
You are faithful and we will trust in you.

Yahweh, God unchanging.
Yahweh, firm foundation.
You are Yahweh, God unchanging.
Yahweh, firm foundation

2) Uncreated One,
You have no end and no beginning.
Earthly powers fade,
But there is no end to your Kingdom.
Always loving, always true,
Always merciful and good, so good.

Yesterday, today and forever,
You are the same, you never change.
Yesterday, today and forever,
You are faithful and we will trust in you.

Vicky Beeching CCL No. 515642

Prayers of Praise and Confession

God of all grace, you alone our our hope.
Without you and your gracious, understanding love
We would feel lost, isolated and without hope in this dark, dark world.
God of all mercy, you alone are our hope,
Day by day our words, deeds and thoughts
Add to the emptiness of your world.
Each day our self-centredness and self interest build barriers between us even higher.

Yet we praise you that it is your gracious love that restores our hope and that through Christ you make it possible for us to begin again.

God of love, we fall before you in praise and adoration.
It is your unconditional love that tears down the barricade that our selfishness has fashioned.
It is your grace that transforms our lives.
It is your power that renews our worship.
It is your love that gives us hope.

God of Hope, we thank you that, in Jesus, we hear your word of grace;
That, in him, you have promised to hold our hand and to show us the way.
It is through the Holy Spirit that your hope is planted in our hearts and lives.
Now by your grace, make us channels of your hope, that the whole world may sing of your glory. **Amen**

It is by your grace that we dare to come before you and confess to you that which you already know of us. We recollect our lives, our weakness as well as our strength, our sin as well as our love, our failures as well as our success; in so doing we recognize that our strength, love and success has its roots not in us but in you.

In this moment, aware of your grace, once more we seek your forgiveness, cleansing, healing and wholeness. By your grace once more speak to us those much-needed words of assurance – Your sins are forgiven. **Amen**

Reading: Matthew 13: 24 -30, 36 – 43 The Parable of the Weeds among the Wheat

He put before them another parable: ‘The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, “Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?” He answered, “An enemy has done this.” The slaves said to him, “Then do you want us to go and gather them?” But he replied, “No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.”’

Jesus Explains the Parable of the Weeds

Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, ‘Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.’ He answered, ‘The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!

StF 123 Come, come you thankful people come

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| 1) Come, you thankful, people, come
Raise the song of harvest home!
Fruit and crops are gathered in
Safe before the storms begin:
God our maker will provide
For our needs to be supplied;
Come, with all his people, come,
Raise the song of harvest home! | 3) For the Lord our God shall come
And shall bring his harvest home;
He himself on that great day,
Worthless things shall take away,
Give his angels charge at last
In the fire the weeds to cast,
But the fruitful ears to store
In his care for evermore. |
| 2) All the world is God’s own field,
Harvests for his praise to yield;
Wheat and weeds together sown
Here for joy or sorrow grown:
First the blade and then the ear,
Then the full corn shall appear –
Lord of harvest, grant that we
Wholesome grain and pure may be. <i>Henry Alford (1810-1871) CCL No 515642</i> | 4) Even so, Lord, quickly come –
Bring your final harvest home!
Gather all your people in
Free from sorrow, free from sin,
There together purified,
Ever thankful at your side –
Come, with all your angels, come,
Bring that glorious harvest home! |

Reading Romans 8: 12-25

So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Sermon

The Parable of the sower was the passage from the Gospel for last Sunday. This week it is the Parable of the weeds; Gardeners World and Gardeners Question Time, Beechcroft, Garden Rescue, The Instant Gardener, the Edible Garden (I nearly made a mistake there and had the edible gardener) and many more programmes besides are on the TV and Radio for the Gardening Enthusiast to watch that they might learn and develop their skills. They are there for those like myself to watch and learn and do very little about it – or maybe to be tempted to do a little.

All these programmes are on the same subject but dealing with gardening in different ways. Gardeners World and Beechcroft seek to advise and guide the gardener with ideas about their gardens, to enthuse and encourage people to have a go.

Instant Gardener and Garden Rescue are about other coming and dealing with the issue on behalf of the home-owner.

I sometimes wonder what happens to these gardens two or three years down the line.

The Parable of the weeds challenges the original listener and the current reader and hearer about the presence of evil and suffering in the world. No Parable can give a clear definitive answer to the big questions of life and faith, we need to take them together and get a sense of what God is saying to his people and the world through reflecting upon them all.

One of the many questions that people ask is "Why doesn't God do something?"

When Tragedies and Horrific accidents happen which devastate lives and families' people ask, "Why doesn't God do something?"

When a disease like Covid 19 sweeps across the world people may ask, "Why doesn't God do something?"

We want the "Instant Gardener response team" version of God. A God who will come along clear the decks and start again. Think back to the story of Noah and how that worked out for the majority of people.

When tyrants and bullies force their own plans on people, crush opposition and seem to get away with it people may ask, "Why doesn't God do something?"

If God were to rule the world directly and immediately so that every thought and action were weighed and instantly judged and punished where necessary in the light of God's own holiness who could stand? If the

price of God stopping a campaign of genocide were that every evil thought and action, including those we still love and cherish, would be rebuked and restrained and punished would we be prepared to pay that price. Will God act on certain issues when we ask and ignore others because they would inconvenience us? The Parable of the weeds gives a picture of a God of grace not willing that the good and potential good would be damaged and destroyed by the wiping out of evil immediately.

Between the two sections of Matthew's Gospel that we heard are two more parables, the parable of the mustard seed that grows into a big tree for birds to nest in and of the leaven, yeast, placed into the dough. These parables all have a sense of waiting. Waiting is not what many of us are good at.

The last verse in the Romans reading is; -

"Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience."

In some translation it is delivered as patient endurance; patient endurance - I almost want to say spend some time thinking about that phrase.

What is it we truly hope for? We hope for the full coming of God's Kingdom.

Our hope is **"that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies."**

The farmer waits for the harvest time whilst watching the weeds grow; the birds wait for the tree to grow and the woman waits for the leaven to work its way through the dough that the bread may rise properly.

The followers of Jesus, and those who were awaiting a Messiah wanted instant change to society. God's timetable is not our timetable; we want instant results but God does not fit into our timetable but rather invites us into God's.

The servants want to pull up the weeds as soon as possible but the farmer restrains them because life is never that simple; in their zeal to pull up weeds they would inevitably pull up and damage wheat as well.

Does God delight in seeing his field of wheat invaded by weeds? No. Neither does he want to declare harvest too soon and so not get the best crop.

The message of the Gospel is, of course, that God has acted decisively in the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus so that at judgement there is hope of life and not death for all.

Once the Garden has been sorted it still needs maintenance and care that it might grow properly;

Let us engage in the Kingdom gardening with patient endurance for the time of God to be fulfilled.

The Instant Gardener and Gardeners World in harmony.

There are some things we must wait for and in that waiting time there are things we must do without hesitation.

In an earthly sense some waiting is good – for a safe time to cross the road.

Some waiting is bad – waiting to apologise; not helping someone in need now, or feeding the hungry, and not liberating the oppressed and persecuted now.

Some things we cannot wait to do; now is the time for action of love.

Whilst we await the fulfilment of God's purpose, in God's time with patient endurance we are to love one another.

God's waiting is not because he enjoys seeing suffering but all sin deserves the same punishment and to hold back is about grace and love as opposed to law and retribution.

A Prayer

All things in Christ seem darker now.
The reflection from his glorious light
reveals the emptiness of much we grasp
and shows the way that we should walk

All things in Christ are brighter now
His mighty love illumines all;
His presence transforms the darkest hour
As he walks with us, our Saviour and Lord.

All things in Christ are hopeful now.
His grace sets free what once was bound.
With joy unleashed we face each day.
In him the price of peace is paid.

All things in Christ are eternal now
Our God made man has called us home;
The door with which we locked him out
In Christ alone is opened wide.

All things in Christ are challenged now.
His loving presence heals our blindness;
At last we see his broken world
To which he sends us to prove his love.

Amen.

StF Hear the call of the kingdom

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| 1) Hear the call of the Kingdom,
Lift your eyes to the King;
Let his song rise within you
As a fragrant offering
Of how God, rich in mercy,
Came in Christ to redeem all
Who trust in his unfailing grace. | Ch) King of heaven, we will answer the call,
We will follow, bringing hope to the world,
Filled with passion, filled with power to
proclaim
Salvation in Jesus' name. |
| 2) Hear the call of the Kingdom
To be his children of light
With the mercy of heaven,
The humility of Christ;
Walking justly before him,
Loving all that is right,
That the life of Christ may shine through us. | 3) Hear the call of the Kingdom
To reach out to the lost
With the Father's compassion
In the wonder of the cross,
Bringing peace and forgiveness,
And a hope yet to come:
let the nations put their trust in him. |

*Keith Getty (b. 1974) Kristyn Getty (b. 1980) Stuart
Townsend (b. 1963) CCL No 515642*

Prayers of Intercession

I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with my whole heart

I will glorify your name forever.

Righteous Father, through your Son we are adopted as heirs of your glory.

Keep your Church faithful to this hope ...

Open our hearts to be receptive to your awesome presence.

I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with my whole heart

I will glorify your name forever.

Righteous Father, give to the governments due proportion in guarding and protecting their people from those of evil intent ..

Turn all our hearts from ways of hatred to peace.

I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with my whole heart

I will glorify your name forever.

Righteous Father, your love shows compassion and restraint to children of your Kingdom and to those who would disrupt it.

Give us the same patience and grace to be agents of your transforming love ...

Fortify us in the struggle of your dawning Kingdom.

I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with my whole heart

I will glorify your name forever.

Righteous Father, as we wait with longing for your glory,

Be with all who groan and endure hardship ...

Bring your light to our darkness

I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with my whole heart

I will glorify your name forever.

Righteous Father, gather to yourself all whose earthly days have come to an end ...

May they shine in the brightness of your eternal glory.

I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with my whole heart

I will glorify your name forever.

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come;
thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the
glory for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are
yours now and for ever. **Amen.**

SoF 345 And can it be

- 1) And can it be that I should gain
An interest in the Saviour's blood?
Died he for me, who caused his pain?
For me, who him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be
That thou, my God, shouldst die for me?
- 2) 'Tis mystery all: the Immortal dies!
Who can explore his strange design?
In vain the first-born seraph tries
To sound the depths of love divine.
'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore,
Let angel minds enquire no more.
- 3) He left his Father's throne above –
So free, so infinite his grace –
Emptied himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam's helpless race,
'Tis mercy all, immense and free;
For, O my God, it found out me!
- 4) Long my imprisoned spirit lay
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray –
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light,
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed thee.
- 5) No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in him, is mine!
Alive in him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach the eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ, my own.

Charles Wesley (1707-1789) CCL No 515642

Blessing