

12th July 2020 - 5th Sunday after Trinity

Welcome

Welcome to our service this morning, brought to you by the churches of the benefice of Rural East York. My name is Nick Bird, and I have the privilege of being the parish priest for this lovely group of villages. Today's address is being given by our curate, Mark Poole, whom we welcomed for the first time last Sunday. Let us turn our hearts to God...

Call to worship

Our call to worship is from Micah 6:8.

God has told you O mortal, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

Let us pray:

It is good to be together, God,
on these screens, with these people,
together listening for your voice,
united by your Spirit.
In this time of worship
tell us about your kingdom of kindness
so that we can seek it.
Show us your justice,
and how we can live it out in your world.
We want to walk with you,
humbly, closely, daily.
Amen.

Hymn: To God be the Glory

To God be the glory, great things he has done!
So loved he the world that he gave us his Son,
who yielded his life an atonement for sin,
and opened the life-gate that all may go in:

*Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!
Let the earth hear his voice!
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!
Let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son;
And give him the glory - great things he has done!*

O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood!
To every believer the promise of God!
The vilest offender who truly believes,
that moment from Jesus forgiveness receives:

Chorus

Great things he has taught us, great things he has done,
and great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;
but purer, and higher, and greater will be
our wonder, our rapture, when Jesus we see:

Chorus

Confession

Let us still our hearts before God as we make our confession:

For all that we withhold from others,
and from you:

time, attention, love and effort,
we ask for your mercy and healing.

Kyrie eleison (*Lord, have mercy*)

For all that we give that is

not authentically of us:

platitudes, empty promises and false hope,
we ask for your mercy and healing.

Kyrie eleison (*Christ, have mercy*)

For all that we see,

but miss the wonder and awe,

or the opportunity for love and service,

we ask for your mercy and healing.

Kyrie eleison (*Lord, have mercy*)

May God our Father forgive us our sins
and bring us to the fellowship of his table
with his saints for ever.

Amen.

Bible Reading - Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: 'Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!'

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Address – Mark Poole

I'm Mark Poole, the one-week old new curate of this benefice, and it is really good to be with you.

I planted some seeds a couple of weeks ago. I sowed them in rich composted soil, placed them in a warm and light spot and have carefully watered them. And to the amusement of my family, I am really excited that they have germinated, and are on their way to becoming delicious basil for my salad!

The parable we have just heard is sometimes known as 'The Parable of the Four Soils.' Like me, you may be tempted to immediately consider which kind of soil you are. And you might be expecting your shiny new curate to be the good soil, who hears the word of God, understands it and bears much

fruit. But if I am really honest, I am rarely ever just one type of soil, certainly not always the good, rich soil and in fact I could be any one of the four soils in a week... and maybe sometimes even in a day! Sometimes I just don't get it about God's Kingdom. Sometimes I am really inspired by it, but I fail to let it get rooted. Sometimes I get too distracted by worrying about things or wishing I had this or that, which just leaves me feeling empty. And yes, sometimes, everything seems just right, and I can see the fruits of the Spirit springing forth. Maybe Jesus does want us to think about our soils from time to time, and maybe that's no bad thing.

But maybe Jesus is also trying to tell us something else that is just as relevant today as it was in his day. Jesus was revolutionary in using the ordinary events of life, in this case the sowing of seeds, and transforming them into telling us something about the extraordinary love of God. Unlike the accounts in Mark's and Luke's Gospel, Matthew describes this parable as the 'Parable of the Sower.' And this is really significant, because Matthew is keen to tell us that *Jesus Christ is the sower*. This is a parable full of promise and hope. Jesus sows the seed in extravagance and generosity. Indeed, He sows in almost reckless abundance as the seed is scattered freely and sown in all kinds of ground, not precisely and scientifically like me, sowing my basil seeds *only in good and worthy soil*. And there's more, the sower, Jesus Christ, is with us always, as Matthew states in the closing line of his Gospel in chapter 28, 'And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.' So even when there are rocky and rough times, which inevitably there will be as the seeds of His Word become planted in our hearts, He *is* with us, the Harvest *does* come, and the Harvest *is* God's. Just as mysteriously and miraculously the germination of a seed happens, bursts forth and bears fruit, so we can be certain and sure of the victory of the Kingdom of God.

More than ever, at this time of uncertainty, living in the shadows of the pandemic with much uncertainty, anxiety and even hopelessness, this parable is bursting with the good news of promise and hope. The seed of victory *is* God's and the seed of His Kingdom *will* come.

I pray that this seed will be planted firmly in your heart and mine. So that we will know it and understand it. And that it will bear fruit and fill us with joy and peace this day, and for evermore. **Amen.**

Intercessions – Terry Joyce

As we offer to God our intercessions today, we pray first of all for God's Church, and for ourselves as part of God's Church. May the seeds of your word, scattered among us this morning, which Mark has opened up for us, and which we have heard read, fall on fertile soil within us, we pray, O Lord. May they take root in our hearts and lives and produce an abundant harvest in lives well lived, reflecting your love. We pray today with thanksgiving, for all who have sown the seed of Jesus within us – whenever it has happened and however it has fared over time. Let us now be growers, Lord, so that we may sow. We praise you for your gift of the Holy Spirit which nurtures growth. Lord, as you bring miraculous growth from ordinary seeds, transform our lives we pray.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

We continue to pray for God's Church as we remember those who, with Mark, were licensed as lay-workers to new ministries last weekend. We also pray especially today for our new Archbishop, Stephen, as we welcome him to this Diocese and Province, especially at this challenging time. We pray that you may bless him with abundance for the task ahead.

Also, within the diocese, we give thanks for the recent news of a strategic funding grant of £1.37 million for the proposed Mustard Seed initiative in the diocese, seeking to grow disciples in places where life is tough.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

This is a time in our nation and world where people are looking for hope and security in the face of the Covid pandemic. So we pray for our world, we pray for all who are working against this disease in research labs, seeking out vaccines and treatments, in hospitals and care homes caring for the sick, in political decisions in the governments of the world; and we even pray for those who deny the significance of this disease – those in power making decisions for others – and those who think it won't affect them and put others at risk. Sow the seeds of your love and wisdom across the world, we pray, O Lord.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

We pray for those whose livelihoods are affected at this time. We give thanks for more opening up of our lockdown measures agreed so far, but we know many jobs are already lost or at risk. So we hold before you all who today find themselves on rocky and uncertain ground – all for whom future weeks look bleak.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

We pray for particular individuals we know whom we are concerned for:

Those in our own networks of family and friends

All who are needing the care of others

Those who are mourning the loss of loved ones.

We thank you that we can name them to you and pray for your healing and strength for them.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

As we conclude our prayers we pray for ourselves in the week ahead in all that we seek to do and be. We pray for a calming of the restlessness of our hearts, especially among anxiety or fear.

**Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

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.

Lead us not into temptation

but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours

now and for ever.

Amen.

Offertory

Thank you to all of you who have made a financial contribution to the work of the church via our Golden Giving link. If any of you feel moved to do similarly, then there is a link for that in the information below. Even though we are not gathering in our buildings in the same way, we continue to give to support the work of the wider church, as well as the ongoing costs of ministry within our own churches here. If you would usually attend worship regularly in this benefice and give on the open plate, but have not been able to do so while there is no public worship, then perhaps we might now encourage you to switch to a standing order or to write a cheque to your usual church.

Thank you, and may our final hymn be a time of thanksgiving and offering.

Hymn: Christ triumphant, ever reigning

Christ triumphant, ever reigning,

Saviour, Master, King!

Lord of heaven, our lives sustaining,

hear us as we sing:

Yours the glory and the crown,

the high renown, the eternal name.

Word incarnate, truth revealing,
Son of Man on earth!
power and majesty concealing
by your humble birth:
Yours the glory and the crown,
the high renown, the eternal name.

Suffering servant, scorned, ill-treated,
victim crucified!
death is through the cross defeated,
sinners justified:
Yours the glory and the crown,
the high renown, the eternal name.

So, our hearts and voices raising
through the ages long,
ceaselessly upon you gazing,
this shall be our song:
Yours the glory and the crown,
the high renown, the eternal name.

Blessing

May the Lord prepare the good earth of your heart
that it may be receptive to all that he plants in you.
May the Lord sow richly in your life
that you may bring to fruition that which the Spirit gifts to you.
May the Lord bring forth in you a ripe harvest
of faith and love and joy:
And may the blessing of God almighty,
Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer,
bless you and keep you, today and all your days.

Amen.