

## KSAT Worship Service for Sunday – 12<sup>th</sup> July 2020

### THEME – ‘Telling our Story’

Thanks to Joyce Worsfold for this week’s service.

‘From the moment we are born we need to grow and to thrive and the more that we flourish the more fruit we will bear, the more we share; the greater our joy.’

#### **Prayer of Accession.**

Dearest Lord, in the quietness we worship at your feet.

We long to be with You to hear Your voice.

Help us to listen to what you have to say.

Help us to understand what we must do. Amen

#### **Hymn – MP1238 When I see the beauty of a**

**sunset.** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NqtgE22w58>

When I see the beauty of a sunset’s glory, amazing artistry across the evening sky;

When I feel the mystery of a distant galaxy,

It awes and humbles me to be loved by a God so high.

*What can I do but thank You? What can I do but give my life to You?*

*Hallelujah, Hallelujah.*

When I hear the story of a God of mercy, who shared humanity and suffered by our side;

Of the cross they nailed You to, that could not hold You,

Now Your making all things new by the power of Your risen life.

#### **And so we thank God as we pray.**

Father God, it is so good for us all to be with You this morning, and, though we can’t see one another, thank You that we are *together*, joined in worship and praise, *together* in Love. Lord, we praise and thank You that You enable us to connect with one another. We thank You that our minds and hearts can be linked and bonded as one, that we are glued together by Your immense and incredible love. We are so grateful to know that, with You, we are never alone and that, with You and Your people, there is always a shoulder to cry on, arms to embrace and great flocks of smiles to warm and encourage.

Thank You, Lord for giving us seeds to sow, seeds to grow **Your** Kingdom. Help us to scatter them lavishly with understanding and joy so that many people will also come to experience and understand Your Love. **Amen**

#### **Prayers for Forgiveness**

Father God, at this difficult time we are constantly reminded to wash our hands to avoid infection. Help us to remember, also, the importance of cleansing our souls so that we can be protected against evil. As we quiet our minds, help us to be aware of anything that we have done wrong in the past week ....

Forgive us for angry words and thoughtless conversations, for times when we have been impatient or unkind. Forgive us for desiring praise and for times when we have been unable to offer encouragement. Pardon us, Lord for those occasions when we have failed to listen carefully and for pushing our own agendas rather than taking on board the good ideas of others.

We are sorry, Lord, for the times when we’ve failed to follow You as we should. Please forgive us, Father. **Amen**

## Hymn – MP 506. O Lord my God <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mHggQjJrxl8>

O Lord my God, When I in awesome wonder, consider all the worlds Thy Hands have made;  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder, Thy power throughout the universe displayed.

*Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee, How great Thou art, How great Thou art.*

*Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee, How great Thou art, How great Thou art!*

When through the woods & forest glades I wander, and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees.

When I look down, from lofty mountain grandeur and see the brook, and feel the gentle breeze.

And when I think, that God, His Son not sparing; sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in;

That on a Cross, my burdens gladly bearing, He bled and died to take away my sin.

When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation, and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart.

Then I shall bow, in humble adoration, and then proclaim: "My God, how great Thou art!"

## READING from Matthew 13:1-16

*That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. Whoever has ears, let them hear."*

*The disciples came to him and asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?" He replied, "Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. This is why I speak to them in parables:*

*"Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand".*

*In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: "'You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving."*

*For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.'*

*But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear.*

## Hymn – MP 467 Morning Has Broken <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=we-n-Zmgl0>

Morning has broken like the first morning, blackbird has spoken like the first bird  
Praise for the singing Praise for the morning Praise for them springing fresh from the Word

Sweet the rain's new fall, sunlit from heaven, like the first dew fall on the first grass  
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden sprung in completeness where His feet pass

Mine is the sunlight, mine is the morning, born of the One Light Eden saw play

Praise with elation, praise every morning, God's recreation of the new day

## Reading. Matthew 13 :18-23

*"Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."*

## Reflection

*'Are you sitting comfortably? Then I'll begin'* Funny how, even after all those years, these words fill me with anticipation. Many of you will recognise them as heralding story-time, 'Listen with Mother' on the radio in the 1950's. A world even before television when Jackanory held us in its thrall. I don't know about you but thankfully, my adventure into storyland began at my mother's knee or cuddled up on the sofa with a magical book. Then the words, 'Once Upon a Time...' were full of promise, wonder and excitement.

## Storytelling has played a big part in people's lives throughout history

Can you picture a beautiful, sunny place, families sitting together beside a shining lake, water gently lapping on the shore. Some have picnics and blankets to sit on, others are alone but glad to be part of a crowd. Excited chatter, laughter, children playing ... still the throng increases. A man arrives and there is a sudden hush, he sits down on a mound but the crowd scramble towards him, excitement on their faces. He realises that his words won't reach them all so he clambers aboard a boat and a friend takes him a little way out into the lake. The people wait... then He begins;

### **'Once there was a man...**

What a story-teller Jesus was, each one crafted to reach a specific audience. All situations with which His listeners were familiar. After all, for the most part they were ordinary folk, keyworkers on whom everyone depended, housewives, farmers, shepherds, workers in vineyards, fishermen, tax collectors. He took the familiar and wove it into a teaching tool that would grow like a seed in their minds, something to be pondered on in the heart long after the story was finished.

### **'Once there was a man who went out to sow corn'**

Seeds have played an enormous part in 'Lockdown' for me. Anxious to continue to create a garden, I was somewhat crestfallen to find garden centres and nurseries suddenly closed. Buying plants online also proved traumatic – when you are in the middle of a glorious warm, sunny spell and the internet informs that, *'Due to Covid 19 and unusually high demand we regret to inform you that plant delivery can now take around 6 weeks.'*

Then, at the back of a cupboard I was cleaning, I found a tin box and inside I found... a treasure trove. All those packets of seeds I had received free with gardening magazines were awaiting a rich and fertile home.

Some I scattered on the garden and the birds left their amply provided birdfeeder to gobble them all up. Some fell on stony ground which I hadn't made a good job of digging and even though I watered carefully the sun shrivelled them and they died. Others were choked to death by superfast growing nettles, thistles and burgeoning buttercups. This was not going well and time was passing. I might have given up at that point but then I looked at my carefully nurtured pile of recycled plastic and thought, 'Plantpots!'

It was then that the real excitement began, ice-cream cartons and yoghurt pots, cut down plastic bottles, and plastic cups were all punctured, filled with compost and then the seeds were carefully sown, all safely inside the house... away from all danger. A time of waiting, watching, watering and nurturing, then the first two leaves appeared, then others, then more! What joy!

## Looking not seeing.

I do not believe that when Jesus told this story He was simply imparting horticultural knowledge. This wasn't just some episode of 'Gardeners' World' where people would learn how to work their allotment. When the disciples asked why He told these stories, or parables, Jesus said, *'The reason I use parables when talking to them is that they look, but do not see, and they listen, but do not hear or understand.'*

In other words, it is no use using erudite lectures or complex performances in passing on the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom. If you do, people will get bored and 'stop up their ears' 'and close their eyes'.

Jesus pointed out that it had always been so, interpreting the difficulties that Isaiah had encountered, *'The people will listen and listen, but will not understand, they will look and look but will not see, because their minds are dull.'*

The end of Isaiah's prophecy is heart breaking. *'Otherwise their eyes would see, their ears would hear, their minds would understand, and they would turn to me, says God, and I would heal them.'*

When Jesus looked at this huge crowd, hungry for stories and so much more He must have been filled with compassion. He must have longed for them to think carefully and deeply.

*'Am I like the seed that fell on the path?*

*Is the kingdom of God for me?*

*Have I let the evil one snatch all the desire for God away?*

I'm sure there were some who did think, *'Oh this is a great message, what an amazing man, this God is certainly worth a try'* But sadly, even they became distracted like seeds that fell on rocky ground and the hope shrivelled and died.

Jesus probably knew some of the people in the crowd; perhaps they, like the rich young man who came to Jesus, realised that something was missing in their lives and longed for spiritual fulfilment but the lure of fame, pleasure and riches had already choked those sacred seeds.

Often in our churches, we become disheartened when the things that **we try** to bring people to faith appear to fail, this parable has a great deal to teach us. Jesus points out that every seed **will not** grow. He shows us all the pitfalls, all we can do is to keep on trying, praying and sharing our stories; *'This is what God has done for me.'*

So... we keep on tilling the soil, removing the stones, preparing the ground, eradicating the weeds. Our job might be **just** to do this, it might be someone else who does the planting.

Finally, we need to remember that it is Jesus who changes people, not us. It is He that made the sacrifice and does the saving.

He knows the shape of souls, He is the water that they search for, He is the food that will enable them to grow. The sower in the story worked **with** God in creation. We are that person. We make the land ready for the harvest by caring, loving and praying. We need to have a **real hunger** for people to know God. We need to **yearn** for them to be saved, to **ache** for their souls to be open to Him, to **crave** for the Kingdom to grow. We cannot afford to be apathetic, we need to be **passionate** in our praying, fervent in our desire for others to recognise their Saviour.

**Hymn 606. Soften my heart, Lord** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UqHsGfWiU9g>

Soften my heart, Lord, soften my heart; from all indifference set me apart  
To feel Your compassion, to weep with Your tears.  
Come soften my heart, O Lord. Soften my heart

## Prayer

*(Please add names and situations to this prayer as you visualise them being introduced to Jesus)*

Dear Lord, master and friend. I long for all the people I know and love to experience Your friendship, love and grace. I yearn for them to feel the power of Your mighty love and to know without doubt that a close relationship with You enables all other relationships and fills us with peace and great joy. **Lord I bring before You .....**

Lord, give me simple words to chat about Your love. Help me to speak with sincerity, kindness and gentle humour. Give me all that I need to be an effective evangelist, give me humility, enthusiasm, the gift of words, understanding and compassion.

Lord, fill me with love. Give me eyes that see where help is needed, ears that hear the quietest pleas. Help me to be aware of those whose needs are unspoken and help me to be kind, caring and useful. **Amen.**

## Hymn – MP 1161 Bring heaven to earth

Lord. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fx8FoTUyFk>

Bring heaven to earth, Lord, bring peace where there's fear  
Bring life where there's death, Lord, bring joy in these tears  
Bring love where there's lust, Lord, bring hope where there's pain  
Bring rest where there's chaos, bring faith where there's fame  
You invite us to partner with You to see Your kingdom come

*We are blessed, to bless a world in pieces; we are loved, to love where love is not  
We are changed, to be the change You promised; we are freed, to be Your hands, O God*

Bring home to the homeless, bring keys to the chained  
Bring worth to the purchased and touch to the shamed  
Bring flesh from your word, Lord, bring truth where there's spin  
Bring risk where's there safety and grace where there's sin  
In the broken, we shall see restored the image of our King

Lord we cry out to You – change the atmosphere; breathe new life in all who gather here

Bring justice to profit, bring patience to growth  
Bring wisdom to progress, plant trees on this road  
Bring freedom from debt, Lord, an end to excess  
Bring closer Your kingdom by quiet success  
May we grow in the knowledge of You through every heart and face

*(After singing this hymn I would ask you to use the words as a basis for your prayers of intercession inserting your own short prayers between the verses and making the chorus an affirmation of your personal faith.)*

## The Lord's Prayer

### Hymn – MP 743 We'll walk the Land'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oxjjaf-YaAc>

We'll walk the land with hearts on fire and every step will be a prayer  
Hope is rising, new day dawning, sound of singing fills the air  
Two thousand years and still the flame is burning bright across the land  
Hearts are waiting, longing aching for awakening once again  
*Let the flame burn brighter, in the heart of darkness, turning night to glorious day  
Let the song grow louder as our love grow stronger; let it shine! let it shine!*  
We'll walk for truth, speak out for love, in Jesus' name we shall be strong  
To lift the fallen, to save the children, to fill the nation with your song

## A Grace.

May the grace of God fill each of our hearts  
May His peace envelop and enfold us  
And His love wrap us all together  
Ensuring that we are one body in His service, today and every day. **Amen**