

KSAT Worship Service for Sunday – 19th July 2020

THEME – ‘Parable of the wheat and tares’

Thanks to Tony Longworth for this week’s service.

Prayer. Lord God, our heavenly Father, we come to You, acknowledging Your love, Your greatness and Your compassion to all, yet so many are struggling at this time through grief, despair and heaviness of heart. We pray for all – uplift and build up Your body, the Church, by the Holy Spirit. We pray protection and blessing upon all those in authority, thankful for their pastoral oversight within our circuit and those of other denominations who are serving You. We praise You that You are sovereign and that You are for us every step of our journey; may we honour You, be obedient and rest in the assurance of Your love now and for evermore. For Jesus’ sake. **Amen**

Hymn MP 200 – Great is thy

faithfulness <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTKlqmdfH5k>

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father, there is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not as Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

*Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness! Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided; Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest, sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
Join with all nature in manifold witness to Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth, Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow, Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Reflection on Covid19: when Jesus says ‘*I have come to give you life, life in all its fullness*’ (John 10v10), surely there should be a ‘let out clause’ for situations such as the present, but there isn’t! So, how are our ‘root’ systems? Deep or shallow, just below the surface or spread out deep – or to rephrase, ‘from where do we draw our sustenance from?’ Praise, worship, Bible reading, Christian books, sermons on the internet, talking to people on the phone or email – and, of course, the time kept especially for prayer and meditation. A poem, by Sidlow Baxter, in his comments on Job, reminds us how God so often speaks during the difficult times:

Not oft mid busy servings, life's deepest truths are learned;
Not oft mid noisy strivings, the Spirit's voice discerned.
Not in life's crowded places, where jostling cares intrude,
But, in life's lonely spaces, God speaks in solitude

The solitude of illness - the loneliness, lingering - drear,
Tis oft predestined stillness, the voice of heaven to hear.
Old age - sad isolation, when friends of yore are gone
Oft brings most revelation of the abiding One.

Affliction's deprivation - blind eyes, deaf ears, spent powers,
Ah, painful separation to lonely, trying hours!
The lonesomeness when heart breaketh, and none on earth can ease;
Ah, most of all God speaketh in solitudes like these.

The prophet's lone vocation, some heavenly call pursued,
The far flung mission station - these bring their solitude.
Thrice-blessed heart-break places, where lone and drear we plod!
For in life's loneliest spaces we must discover - GOD.

So, in the midst of these times, with our faith rooted on our faithful God, let us pray.

Prayers

'The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom.'

Almighty God, this morning, we, the people of Your kingdom, come to You in humble adoration; we come to worship You, the great Creator and our Heavenly Father. We come seeking new understanding of all that You have done for us and of all that we are called to in the building of Your Kingdom. We come, one in You, though separated from each other – and together, we praise and adore and worship You. Today, may we learn from You – how to be Your presence in the world, and to be fruitful for you in all we think, say and do. Keep us always watchful and prayerful.

Lord, we know we do not always live as people of Your Kingdom – and we admit our faults and ask for Your forgiveness. You take us, such very imperfect people, and show us that, when we place ourselves in Your care, we can be the people You want us to be. And we hear the words of Jesus, 'Your sins are forgiven' and we are thankful. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

OT Reading – Psalm 86 v 11-17

Teach me Your way, LORD, that I may rely on Your faithfulness.

Give me an undivided heart, that I may fear Your name.

I will praise You, Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify Your name forever.

For great is Your love toward me; You have delivered me from the depths,
from the realm of the dead.

Arrogant foes are attacking me, O God; ruthless people are trying to kill me—
they have no regard for You.

But You, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God,
slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.

Turn to me and have mercy on me; show Your strength on behalf of Your servant;
save me, because I serve You, just as my mother did.

Give me a sign of Your goodness, that my enemies may see it and be put to shame,
for You, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.

NT Reading – Matthew 13 v 24-30 & 36-43

Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' An enemy did this," he replied.

The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' 'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'

Then Jesus left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field." He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.

Reflection

In Matthew 13 we read the Parable of Wheat and Tares – one of the ‘kingdom’ parables. A parable can be defined as an earthly story with an inward heavenly meaning and Jesus used them extensively to illustrate a spiritual truth, or truths,

A definition of Kingdom of Heaven is ‘that which comes into being wherever the kingly authority is acknowledged’. Although God is always sovereign, Scripture also looks to a future kingdom or reign of salvation. In one sense, this has already come in Christ and yet will also come in its fullness only when Jesus returns.

This parable of Jesus takes a direct parallel from nature and applies it to His plan for humankind. In our reading, we have both the story and, later to His disciples, Jesus’ explanation

This outline covers 3 important themes

- 1) That the good seed, wheat, is sown by ‘The Son of Man; that we are sons of the kingdom
- 2) That weeds are the sons of the evil one – sown by the devil.
- 3) That there will be a final separation and evil will be no more.

(Horticultural note:- Wheat and tares look similar to the inexperienced eye, but the latter have a more robust root system at first – hence the reason for not separating till harvest!).

The parable is framed in such a way so as not to threaten or undermine anyone but underpin Kingdom purposes. It tells us what the presence of GOD means now and what will be when He returns to gather in the harvest – what will happen to the wheat – and the tares.

Themes in the parable are Plan(purposes), Patience (forbearance) and Promises (provision and purpose)

Plan

God’s eternal plan is to offer us eternal life in Jesus – *‘And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.’* (1 John 5 v 11-12)

God is not on lockdown nor is He practising social distancing! His plan and purposes are not ‘on hold’ God has a purpose to be worked out through each one of us, even through this hard time – He has for-ordained work for us to do. *‘For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.’* (Ephesians 2v10). But as *Isaiah 55 v8-9* reminds us, *‘My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are My ways, your ways’* – His thoughts and ways are much higher!

If we fail to acknowledge His sovereignty now, during this time, we may become spiritually impoverished as we come out of this pandemic.

We are children of the kingdom – all unique but with the same responsibility in our ministry, which is, as our Anglican family says ‘Man’s chief aim is to glorify GOD’. For us, in both the easy times and the difficult, our mission is ‘to know Jesus and to make Him known’. We, the children of the Kingdom, are here to build His kingdom by the people we are, as we submit our lives to the King.

Hymn MP 126– Facing a task unfinished https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOpt_bulJxY

Facing a task unfinished that drives us to our knees
A need that, undiminished rebukes our slothful ease
We, who rejoice to know Thee renew before Thy throne
The solemn pledge we owe Thee to go and make Thee known
Where other lords beside Thee hold their unhindered sway
Where forces that defied Thee defy Thee still today
With none to heed their crying for life, and love, and light
Unnumbered souls are dying and pass into the night
*We go to all the world, with Kingdom hope unfurled;
No other name can save but Jesus Christ the Lord*

We bear the torch that flaming fell from the hands of those
Who gave their lives proclaiming that Jesus died and rose
Ours is the same commission, the same glad message ours
Fired by the same ambition to Thee we yield our powers
O Father who sustained them, O Spirit who inspired
Saviour, whose love constrained them to toil with zeal untired
From cowardice defend us, from lethargy awake!
Forth on Thine errands send us to labour for Thy sake

Reflection (cont)

Contrary to public opinion we cannot believe in a personal Saviour unless we acknowledge the existence of Satan. He is mentioned from the oldest book of the Bible- Job and throughout the New Testament. His titles include 'the father of lies', 'the great deceiver', 'prince of the power of the air'. Jesus knew Satan to be real and Peter tells us that *'the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour'* (1 Peter 5v8). Isn't it wonderful that for us that he has no teeth!

Patience

A definition; 'The quality of forbearance and self-control which shows itself particularly in a willingness to wait upon God and His will.'

Patience isn't waiting for a person to change their mind or a situation to be resolved, it is an active, positive, turning, whatever it is, to God in prayer with the assurance of His way will be done. It is one of the golden chords which is interwoven throughout scripture

The problem with patience, or rather the lack of it, is that whilst it may be initially a single issue, it can so easily spill over into other challenges of our lives. There can be, if I may use a current phrase, a 'spiritual lockdown'; a stagnation which must be addressed if we are to grow spiritually. It is said that prayer changes things – especially the one who prays! Over time a person may often abandon their own agenda and learn to trust God, who is always present, all seeing, all knowing, and all powerful. As someone once said, 'If God brings you to it, He will bring you through it!' or as Isaiah puts it, *'The LORD will guide you always; He will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame'*. (Isaiah 58v11)

Sometimes, from my own experience, it may take years to be 'brought through', but in the meantime we develop endurance and faith (see Romans 5v1-5). We may not see the outcome but we can and have His peace through whatever the situation is.

There is always an underlying tension with patience – a sense that 'if only GOD would step in and intervene' a particular event wouldn't happen or something miraculous would take place. Our realising of God's patience towards us will determine how patient we are with others!

His patience can be abused – there is no excuse to continue in deliberate sin when we have the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. *'Those whom the Lord loves He disciplines'* (Hebrews 12v6). Whilst Satan would wish us to be shackled to our past, the Lord disciplines us so that learning its lessons and applying them now, will empower us also for the future.

I cannot remember a time when by politicians and others we have been told to be patient. But for many, during the lockdown, this enforced state has caused increasing isolation and loneliness. We live in an uncertain world – it seems that, wherever we look, there is fear – and people are looking for answers. In politics we have leaders blustering, decisions being made which will threaten much of the fabric of society and the consequences could be devastating – especially for the less privileged. Why hasn't God intervened? And perhaps it isn't only unbelievers who ask that question.

This parable illustrates that, for the present, righteousness and evil co-exist and will do so until our Lord returns; then He will make all things new; but for now we live in the 'in between time'. As Christians, we are to walk circumspectly to discern what is of God and what is 'of the world'. There is no middle ground; either we serve God or the enemy;. But as salt and light we are to impact the world stage.

Although the Church, as we know it now, didn't exist at the time of the parable ie pre-resurrection and Pentecost, the balance of probability is that this parable is talking about our position 'in Christ' contrasting it with the world in which we live – in it, but not of it. To overcome evil we need the Holy Spirit – '*Greater is He within us than he who is in the world*' (1 John 4v4). The battle is won, Christ is resurrected and '*ever lives to make intercession for us*' (Hebrews 7v25)

We are more than conquerors through Him who loves us & gave Himself for us. (Romans 8v37)

Promises are always important in our lives, but when unfulfilled brings disappointment and loss of confidence – yet God is absolutely faithful and can always be trusted

God's ultimate purpose is to sum up all things in Christ (Ephesians 1v10) and to this end God is working in His ways. But we do not see everything that is going on in the spiritual realm. We get impatient and are inclined to rush in where even angels fear to tread! Accepting His Lordship, also means accepting that His timing and ways are perfect – even when we don't understand.

Promises – provision and purpose

Divine promises; 'The promises of God reveal His particular and eternal purposes to which He is unchangeably committed and upon which believers can totally depend.'

These promises are, however, conditional upon obedience on the part of believers and promises are of no use unless they are claimed!

Although I can't verify it, I've read that there are somewhere between 5000-7000 promises in the Bible and Paul tells us '*No matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ*' (2 Corinthians 1v20).

Among those promises is '*I will never leave or forsake you*' (Joshua 1v5).

A useful idea is to personalise God's promises and insert your name into them.

'God will never leave or forsake me ...' (Hebrews 13:5)

'My ... God shall provide all my ... needs according to His riches in glory (Philippians 4:19)

Look out for God's promises as you read His Word – and make them your own!

God's promises provide us with purpose and hope, without which it can be so easy to drift into insecurity and fear – especially in uncertain times.

But we have God's promise that justice and righteousness will prevail, in His way and in His time. The Kingdom of God will come to fullness, but only on Christ's return when He will separate those who are children of light from those who have chosen to live in darkness, In the meantime, we are to 'know Christ and make Him known' in all circumstances, knowing our God is faithful!

Prayer: The field is the world. Lord, I live in a tiny patch of Your world but it is still my field to serve You. I pray that I will give my time and gifts to You and Yours in whatever way I can. Your kingdom come, O Lord. **Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

Lord Jesus, give us the courage to try and change only those things that You would have us change Lord, hear our prayer, **and keep us in Your love.**

Lord Jesus, give us the grace to accept other people who are different from us Lord, hear our prayer, **and keep us in Your love.**

Lord Jesus, give us the wisdom to be patient with those who irritate us Lord, hear our prayer, **and keep us in your love.**

Lord Jesus, give us the vision to share in Your vision that all the world may be one Lord, hear our prayer **and keep us in your love.**

Lord Jesus, give us the strength to work for healing in our own communities Lord, hear our prayer **and keep us in your love.**

Loving Lord, hear our prayers and let your Spirit prepare us with joy for that great day when You will harvest the seed that You have sown among us.

Amen.

Hymn MP 950 Thy way, not mine, O Lord<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqYI6ST3i1U>

Thy way, not mine, O Lord, however dark it be;
Lead me by Thine own hand, choose out the path for me.

Smooth let it be or rough, it will be still the best;
Winding or straight, it leads right onward to Thy rest.

I dare not choose my lot; I would not, if I might;
Choose Thou for me, my God, so I shall walk aright.

Take Thou my cup, and it with joy or sorrow fill,
As best to Thee may seem; choose Thou my good and ill.
Choose Thou for me my friends, my sickness or my health;
Choose Thou my cares for me, my poverty or wealth.

The kingdom that I seek is Thine: so let the way
That leads to it be Thine, else I must surely stray.

Not mine, not mine the choice in things or great or small;
Be Thou my guide, my strength my wisdom, and my all.

May the God of peace garrison our hearts and minds in the knowledge of Jesus Christ now and for evermore. **Amen.**



Could you tell the difference in a mixed field – like the one below?
What does this say to us – especially about judging others?



God has a **plan** for the harvest

We need to be **patient**, to trust His **promises**, and to work in His field until the harvest.

PS

Keswick Convention is being held virtually from July 27th - 31st and a link is available -

<https://youtu.be/ysTMfqW53xA> or
Google Keswick Convention