

Earlsdon Sunday Morning Worship July 12th (Gospel reading The parable of the Sower)

“ What sort of soil are we going to choose to be?”

(There are hyperlinks to you tube for the hymns and alternative version of the Gospel reading. If you are on line , highlight and click on them to open press skip to jump ads)

Call to worship Set PSALM Ps 119: 105-108

By your words I can see where I'm going; they throw a beam of light on my dark path. I've committed myself and I'll never turn back from living by your righteous order. Everything's falling apart on me, GOD; put me together again with your Word.

We Praise God and invite him into our lives as we sing **Stf 545 Be thou my vision**

You tube music :- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CMclLT_Hjg

Prayer of Praise & Thanksgiving

God our Creator, our centre, our friend .We praise and thank you for the wonders of our life, for those who are dear to us and for those who have helped and influenced us. We thank you for the wonders of nature and praise you for its diversity. We thank you for the measure of freedom we have and the extent that our choices Control our lives. We praise and thank you for your Faithfulness and for the hope that we have in Jesus . Enable us to praise and thank you in all we do and say so that we can sow seeds of faith , tend and nurture them to grow your Kingdom. Amen.

Paul's Epistle to the Romans **Romans 8 v11** .

It stands to reason, doesn't it, that if the alive-and-present God who raised Jesus from the dead moves into your life, he'll do the same thing in you that he did in Jesus, bringing you alive to himself? When God lives and breathes in you (and he does, as surely as he did in Jesus), you are delivered from that dead life. With his Spirit living in you, your body will be as alive as Christ's!

REFLECTION What happens when we choose to accept God's amazing Love for us ? What happens when we welcome him into our hearts? When we accept that Jesus came into the world for us as individuals to show God's love for us , we become new born in his Spirit.

Taking that step of personal acceptance of Jesus enables God to pour out his Holy Spirit on us so we become new , Alive in Christ. With Jesus as our Lord and saviour , whatever the challenges or opportunities we come face to face with God is always with us , seeking to guide how we live out our faith.

In this pandemic humanity may seem to have got into a real mess but Romans 8 v38-39 reminds us “neither death nor life , neither angels or demons , neither present or future ,nor any powers , neither height or depth NOR ANYTHING ELSE IN ALL CREATION will be able to separate us from the Love of God that is in Christ Jesus out Lord.”

We sing of this in Stf 351 In Christ Alone

You tube music https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ENTL_li4GbE&list=RD6CMclLT_Hjg&index=2

Prayers of confession and Lords Prayer We take time to confess our weaknesses before God.

Heavenly Father , as the people of God we bring before you our brokenness and the mistakes we make .

We remember the way that our actions ,or lack of them and our words have hurt ourselves and others

We think about the world around us and our response to the challenges of inequality and injustices that we have chosen to tolerated over the years.

Father you know that at times our human nature and self importance often comes between us and trusting Jesus and following his way. Forgive us our weaknesses in these things and continue to pour your love and Mercy upon us . Amen

IN Christ we are made new, through him we are forgiven and born again as God's children. Thanks be to God

We Share together in the Lords Prayer

Gospel reading Matthew 13: 3-9 ,18-23 from The message Harvest story

Dvd version can be found at : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DsO2CQS-HRs>

1-3 At about that same time Jesus left the house and sat on the beach. In no time at all a crowd gathered along the shoreline, forcing him to get into a boat. Using the boat as a pulpit, he addressed his congregation, telling stories. **3-8** “What do you make of this? A farmer planted seed. As he scattered the seed, some of it fell on the road, and birds ate it. Some fell in the gravel; it sprouted quickly but didn't put down roots, so when the sun came up it withered just as quickly. Some fell in the weeds; as it came up, it was strangled by the weeds. Some fell on good earth, and produced a harvest beyond his wildest dreams. **9** “Are you listening to this? Really listening?”

18-19 “Study this story of the farmer planting seed. When anyone hears news of the kingdom and doesn't take it in, it just remains on the surface, and so the Evil One comes along and plucks it right out of that person's heart. This is the seed the farmer scatters on the road.

20-21 “The seed cast in the gravel—this is the person who hears and instantly responds with enthusiasm. But there is no soil of character, and so when the emotions wear off and some difficulty arrives, there is nothing to show for it.

22 “The seed cast in the weeds is the person who hears the kingdom news, but weeds of worry and illusions about getting more and wanting everything under the sun strangle what was heard, and nothing comes of it.

23 “The seed cast on good earth is the person who hears and takes in the News, and then produces a harvest beyond his wildest dreams.”

So how can we respond to our God who reaches out and calls each one of us to become the fertile soil that enables Kingdom growth

REFLECTIONS AND QUESTION

Just how open are we as a Christians working together or as individuals to what Jesus tells us in this story ? Do we strive to be the fertile soil he wants us to be ? In this story what should be important to us?

The last 3 months have been a very challenging time . During this pandemic , stress has been at high levels in many aspects of life :- family relationships, staying safe , challenges of work and finance , what we should be doing as Christians , the unknown new normal that lays ahead . All of these are stressful.

When we are busy doing things our own way and in our own strength , then the Stress that creates makes it easy for us to forget that God wants to know us and is seeking to help . If we are honest , during lockdown there have been times when the pressures of this pandemic have got to us and we have been on edge . It is those pressures that cause us to push the God who Loves each and every one of us to the back of our minds . The fact that God sent Jesus into the world to point the way to how to live slips out of our reckoning. We forget the words of Wesley “ BEST OF ALL GOD IS WITH US” which is also the New Presidents theme for this year.

When we are stressed , how we function is affected. Our Faith becomes like the seed that fell on the rocky ground . By ignoring God’s word and guidance , leaving him out of our choices allows the monsters of modern life , that we struggle to overcome , to gobble up the seed, eating away at our faith , because we keep God at arms length.

When we do make time for God , pause and rest in his presence then the seed can start to take root. God’s word starts to impact upon who we are. We start to make small changes in what we do and say . But if it is to continue to grow and put down roots it has to be nurtured. To start to deepen our understanding and enable the seed to grow it has to be fed and watered by choosing to allow God into all aspects of our life seeking to get close to him . Without that step then the seed cannot grow and it withers away . Even when we do choose to follow closely and set time aside regularly to be with God in prayer and bible study, the pressures of modern life around us can push in on us and come between us and God. They can cause us to ignore the God who is reaching out to us, to love and nurture us . Like the weeds that pressure can start to choke the Good news as its importance is ignored.

We have to fight the weeds by choosing to be active in making our relationship with God a priority 7 days a week. We have to live out our love of God by acknowledging that he has an active part to play in our lives . For it is through his strength and guidance and the power of the holy spirit that we can become fertile soil in which the seed flourishes and bears fruit. God can use the church to reach out through us to the situations this pandemic has thrown up . When we respond to his will and share his love by challenging the injustices

of society values . Through us God can shape the new normal . We need to remember that what we see as problems God sees as opportunities in which his church can bear fruit .

Reflecting on the challenges this pandemic has created we find we have used new ways of reaching out during the “safer-at-home” period to be the church accessible and inclusive to all. Zoom meetings for prayer , fellowship and Bible study . Online gathering linked to regular telephone communication have increased the sense of a greater family, Weekly online District Sunday service have made us feel included. Across the country many churches have been able to reach out to more people through their online presence than during what we use to do. (Ask Steve Fox about the following for CSS and our church services)

If we are to be fertile soil then what we establish as the new normal as lockdown ceases will be important. Some of those new online folks will still be watching and wanting some sort of connection. Even when we can be face-to-face on opening the doors of the church , we cannot forget the great commission of “GO TELL” and those who have become part of our extended family seeking to know more. We have to adjust to the opportunities of the new normal and remain fertile soil through which God can grow his Church in the 21st. Century.

In the last 3 months the fellowship of our church family has helped us face up to the challenges of life. What we have in common is a love of God and our trust and obedience to God’s word unifies us seeking his purpose for the Church . Just like the seed that fell in fertile soil , through the Gifts of the Holy Spirit we will bear fruit. We have to act in God’s strength and under the guidance of the Holy spirit so that we continue to grow and blossom beyond our wildest dream ensuring that the kingdom grows and shapes the new normal.

The Revs Paul Wood and Ian Worsfold wrote Stf 547 Beyond these walls of worship
The words of which remind us that we are called to “Go tell”

You tube music <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2LJaRSvSKQM>

Prayers of intercession

God of wisdom and understanding be with your church as we seek to understand your purpose and will for us in reaching out to those around us. Nurture and tend all new to the faith who are seeking to know you. By you Holy Spirit bring to fruition in each of us the seed of your word

God of endurance and reliability be with your world obsessed by its worries ,cares and short term gains. Renew your people through the power of your Spirit. May our world leaders know your prompting and bring justice and equality for Inspire us in loving each other and creation to live life in a sustainable way.

God of hope and consolation deal tenderly with all for whom life is a struggle and the stresses of this pandemic have impacted upon their well being. Through your loving healing Spirit strengthen each one of us and enable your people the church to share your compassion and love with those in need as we seek to live in your presence. God of life and peace , you set your creation in motion . Bring to fulfilment the purpose you

set for each one of us and for your church as we establish the new normal as we overcome the challenges of the recent months. Live in our hearts through your Holy Spirit enabling us to be your children.

We ask these things in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Amen

We draw this act of worship to a close by singing of the amazing Love of God that reaches out to each one of us. "Love divine all loves excelling" which asks God to use that love to change us into his people.

The original version had 4 verses But John Wesley removed verse 2 "Breathe o breathe thy loving Spirit into every trembling heart because of the line "take away our power of sinning" due to its link to Calvinism and predestination Which clashed with John's belief of having to choose to follow Jesus.

We are going to sing or listen to all 4 verses of STF 503 Love divine all love excelling

You tube Music https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hmfqe_8SEI

Blessing

Our Loving father goes before us in our walk through life. So we go out to join him in sharing the Good news of Jesus, knowing he has anticipated our needs, supporting and strengthening us and leads us out into the world where we walk in the Blessing of Father, Son and Holy Spirit Each and every day. Amen.