

## **Morning Prayer for Tuesday 27 July 2020**

In the name of Christ, who died and was raised by the glory of the Father, welcome: grace, mercy and peace be with you. **And also with you.**

We have come to the city of the living God to the heavenly Jerusalem, with thousands of angels in joyful assembly. **Alleluia!** We have come to God the judge of all, to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant. **Alleluia.**

**Lord, direct our thoughts, teach us to pray, lift up our hearts to worship you in Spirit and in truth, through Jesus Christ. Amen**

Christ our Passover lamb has been offered for us. Let us then rejoice by putting away all malice and evil and confessing our sins with a sincere and true heart.

O Jesus Christ, risen master and triumphant Lord, we come to you in sorrow for our sins, and confess to you our weakness and unbelief. We have lived by our own strength, and not by the power of your resurrection. We have lived by the light of our own eyes, as faithless and not believing. We have lived for this world alone, and doubted our home in heaven. In your mercy, forgive us. Hear us and help us. God who is both power and love, forgive us and free us from our sins, heal and strengthen us by his Spirit, and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Collect**

Generous God, you give us gifts and make them grow; though our faith is small as mustard seeds, make it grow to your glory and the flourishing of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

### **Bible Reading**

Matthew 13:36-43 New International Version (NIV)

Then he 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, 39 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.

### **Thought for Today**

Jesus had been teaching the people and had been using a number of stories which we now know as parables to do so. What is interesting about the teaching of Jesus is that he often doesn't give the answer to the teachings he is sharing. I have been in lots of lessons where the children are given the answer without having to think about it or work it out in their own heads. But Jesus sometime said things that left the disciples scratching their heads to work out what Jesus was talking about. This is the account of one of those occasions. After the crowd had left, the disciples asked Jesus to explain the parable to them.

What I like about the disciple's response is that they waited, they continued to listen to Jesus to see if he told them and the crowd the meaning of the story. When that meaning didn't come, they

remembered the things they didn't understand and asked Jesus directly to explain. I like to do my assemblies in the same way, tell a bible story, reflect on it through the prayer and then wait for the children to think about it and then find an opportunity to come and chat about the story or prayer during breaktime. This is why it is important to be around the school, so that when the time comes I can hopefully answer questions the children may have.

Here we see Jesus explaining his teaching to the disciples, so in the clearest of ways, in verse Matt 13v37-39 Jesus tells his disciples what almost every part of the parable represents: "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" what Jesus doesn't do is say who the servants represent. Some theologians think that the servants represent the disciples or anyone who hears this parable and its meaning. I am sure that we have all questioned why God allow evil to grow and thrive? And I'm sure we all in our way want to work against bad things in our communities.

But here we see that once again God does things in a different way; the servants want to pull up the weeds. God knows that rooting up the weeds would harm the good seed too, the roots of both plants are sharing the same soil and would be intertwined together, uprooting the weed would do more damage to the crop, than leaving them to grow together.

And at the right time it is the harvest workers are the ones that gather in the harvest.

We can read this parable and think that Jesus is talking about two types of people, people who belong to the Kingdom of God and those that don't, wheat and weeds, Good and bad. But this is only part of the answer, Jesus in Matthew 18 v 6-7 warns that if anyone causes someone to loose faith then they should be got rid of, in the same way Jesus teaches in Matt 18v8-9 that if our hand, foot or eye causes us to do wrong things then they should be cut off. So that we may all enter into the kingdom of God serving God as he intended. Before you all go out and cut off a part of your body, Jesus was not talking literally. But what Jesus was talking about was turning away from the things that trip us up and make us stumble. These things are to be handed over to God and forgotten about, as God is able to do.

The language of Jesus in the parables and in His teaching is meant to jar us into recognising the seriousness of anything that leads us or others into sin. Those things that trip us up need to be got rid of, there is a realism in following Jesus, we cannot serve two masters, we have to make a choice and then allow that choice to influence our lifestyle.

In Matthew 16v23 we see Jesus telling Peter to "Get away from me Satan! You are an obstacle in my way, because these thoughts do not come from God but man." In spite of these strong words to Peter and his repeated failings, Jesus does not give up on Peter: In fact, he entrusts the future of His mission to him and the rest of his stumbling disciples. In our world we know that weeds do not become wheat, but Matthews story holds out hope even for those who stumble – even those that Jesus calls a stumbling block.

We need to be mindful that the calling of people into Gods Kingdom is Gods job, not ours. As an owner of a garden, I can be very aggressive when it comes to weeding and tidying, the mower and strimmer comes out and everything that can be mowed and strimmed gets mowed and strimmed whether Rachel put them there or not!

This is often the temptation for our church communities we want everyone to be perfect, forgetting that we are made up of imperfect people.

Jesus' parable makes clear that any attempt to root out the weeds will only do more damage to the crop. This has played out far too many times in congregations and denominations, with some determined to root out anyone who does not agree with the "right" interpretation of Scripture, liturgical practice, or stand on a particular issue. There are also those who pronounce judgment on people outside the church.

Jesus makes clear that we simply cannot be certain who is "in" or who is "out." In fact, God's judgment about these matters will take many by surprise so we need to be people who do what our Father in Heaven wants us to do, and Matthew show us many examples of this. Matt 7:21-23 we need to have an expectant faith where God changes our lives, Matt 8:11-12 we need to do what our Father wants, and like the story in Matthew 21:31-32 of the two sons where one says no but goes and the other says yes but did nothing. Or like the one that saw the needs of others in Matthew 25:31-46 where we are told: "I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. Our job as Christians is not to judge but to share Gods love to all we meet. So, lets thank God that it is not up to us! We can leave the weeding to the angels and get on with the mission Jesus has given us -- proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God.

#### **followed by silence for reflection**

Let us declare our faith in God.

**We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named. We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love. We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high. We believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

#### **Intercessions**

Lord God, make your ways known upon the earth: **your saving power among all the peoples.**

Renew your Church in holiness: **and help us to serve you with joy.**

Let not the needy be forgotten: **nor the hope of the poor be taken away.**

Make us instruments of your peace: **and let your glory be over all the world.**

Pour your healing power upon us; **and upon all those we love who are suffering at this time.**

As you sent your Son into the world: **so send us, to make your glory known. Amen.**

#### **Final Blessing**

And now may the Father, whose glory fills the heavens, cleanse us by his holiness and send us to proclaim his word. The Son, who has ascended to the heights, pour upon us the riches of his grace.

The Holy Spirit, the Comforter, equip us and strengthen us in our walk with Jesus. Amen.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, be amongst us and remain with us always. Amen

Go in Peace to love and serve the Lord In the name of Christ. Amen.