

Morning Worship for 12 July 2020

from the United Reformed Church at Morpeth,
Widdrington and Gt Bavington

Opening Words

Hymn: For the Beauty of the Earth

For the beauty of the earth,
for the beauty of the skies,
for the love which from our birth
over and around us lies:

Gracious God, to thee we raise this our sacrifice of praise.

For the beauty of each hour
of the day and of the night,
hill and vale and tree and flower,
sun and moon and stars of light:

For the joy of ear and eye,
for the heart and mind's delight,
for the mystic harmony
linking sense to sound and sight:

For the joy of human love
brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth, and friends above,
for all gentle thoughts and mild:

For each perfect gift of thine,
to our race so freely given,
graces human and divine,
flowers of earth and buds of heaven:

For thy people, evermore
lifting holy hands above,
offering up on every shore
their pure sacrifice of love:

Gracious God, to thee we raise this our sacrifice of praise.

F. Pierpoint

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Prayer of Approach

Lord, so great, you made the world
Lord, so big, you hold it day by day
Lord, so good, you gave us life
Lord, so loving, you gave us Jesus.
Lord, so forgiving, you help us to start again.
Lord, so great, you help scientists to make discoveries
that will change our lives.

Lord, so big, you call us to care for your world.
Lord, so good, you teach us to care for each other.
Lord, so loving, help us to show the love of Jesus each
day.
Lord, so forgiving, help us to forgive each other
knowing that we have been forgiven. Amen

Source Unknown

Lord's Prayer

Reading: Isaiah 55:10-13

Hymn: You shall go out with joy

You shall go out with joy
And be led forth in peace,
And the mountains and the hills
shall break forth in singing.
There'll be shouts of joy
And the trees of the fields
shall clap, shall clap their hands.

And the trees of the fields
will clap their hands,
And the trees of the fields
will clap their hands,
And the trees of the fields
will clap their hands,
and you'll go out with joy.

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

Reflection

The parable of the sower. It is one we know so well, in fact, we've got a beautiful stained glass window in St. George's in Morpeth of that very parable. Its beautiful. So Jesus tells of seeds that have to be sown. Now we'd expect well nourished and prepared soil and to sow it at fairly regular intervals, but no, this chap, this sower is just scattering the seed around, he's chucking it, throwing it, hoying it with abandon all around the place. So its not all going to hit the soil, some will fall on rocks with very thin poor soil and others will land up in the reeds and the thorns. So when you expect to be able to harvest the seeds and what has grown, some haven't thrived and flourished, surprise surprise! Because how can anything survive on a stony path or rocks with little soil or by being choked by thorns and weeds. Of course not. This is the point that Jesus is making. So as I did for a long long time, thought it was talking about the seeds

being scattered by God being God's Love, God's word, and the path and the weeds were different people who didn't take it up. I often thought that was quite sad as some folk would never come round to know, and to love and to learn about God.

But there are different ways of thinking about this parable. Jesus gave an explanation at the end, when the disciples said, "Why do you talk in parables to the people?" and he explains. And in that second part, in the verses 18 to 23, the bit that talks about having ears to hear, and eyes to see, we know that, but it's not just about people in general. Perhaps the path and the rocky ground and the weeds and thorns can mean all of us, as well as the good soil at times. It's a different way of looking at it, and something I've read recently. It is a different way of thinking about it: that all of those things the three bads and the good areas are in me, are in you, are in any of us. And thinking like that I think is very credible. I can see that I have times when I know I am better than other times, that I do faith better than other times, I'm probably kinder sometimes, more forgiving sometimes than others. So the times when the seed falls on the good soil, the good parts of me, of us, of all of us, that is God's love getting through to us, really getting through to us.

And there are times when I think, "I haven't got time for this", "I haven't got time for them" or whatever it is and that's us, we can be hard hearted sometimes, or a bit dismissive, or not just probably paying due attention to what we should or who we should. Because God asks us, or wants us to pay attention and to show love to everybody, ourselves and everyone around us. Those we know and love already we could love more, unconditionally, as God loves us with all our faults and failings and foibles. But God throws about his love, his seeds of love with gay abandon for all of us. Is it something we can pick up to you? Yes. We need to look at our harder parts and see when we can be more accepting of God loves at all times, and yes we can look at where we can spread love out too. You know I think there was a song, I think in the 1980s, a pop song about spreading The Seeds Of Love. All about The Seeds Of Love, of planting seeds of love.

When my daughter was a little girl, a long time ago now, she went to dancing school and they would do shows for charity. And when she was about 4 she danced to a song, I will not sing for you though:

"If I should plant a tiny seed of love in the Garden of your heart

would you care for it and tend it every day or will it die and fade away.

If I should plant a tiny seed of love in the Garden of your heart"

God does plant seeds of love in our hearts and everywhere. God is always abundant in his love. His love for us is just immense, massively abundant and everywhere, and he is just chucking around for us. It is there, it is in your face, go get it! God's love is there, it's now, it's present and it always has been and always will be, but it's also here and now. So if we grab that love, that wonderful love of God, we can share it and we can plant seeds of love or seeds of hope, particularly love with other people. Share it with people we love and with people we hardly know: share a smile walking down the street. Some of the older folks who have been at St George's a long time, there was a lady and I am sure everyone will remember, she always smiled. Her name was Doreen and she always smiled. And I would ask my mum "Why's that lady smiling?" and she'd say: "She's just happy, always happy." But she smiled when she was in the street, she was smiling before she saw people, she always smiled. And that's love, showing love with a smile. A kind word, saying "Good morning" to someone you pass.

When I was waiting in Morrisons at Amble yesterday, when you have to wait to be told what cash desk to go to, the young man that was doing it said "Are you all right?", "Yes we're fine thank you, you?" It was just a little thing. Does it matter, yes. Kindness is about love: showing love, showing kindness, showing your goodness. Just a moment of time, a few seconds to smile. And if people want to get to know you, and ask more about it, and find out more about you, and ask you things, then you can tell them about God. About God's love. If they are willing and ready to hear. Perhaps everyone has their own time to hear this. I think we are coming together because we are all ready, or we have been ready and we already know, perhaps. But we always learn more and the fact that God's love, all of that seed being thrown around ...for everyone.. Everywhere. It's amazing and it's wonderful. And that is the lesson that Jesus came to preach, that God's love knows no bounds - it is just unending, never ceasing, incredible, limitless. Infinity pools? this is infinity love! And it's there for the taking.

He already loves us, love those who don't even know him, God loves everyone. That if you turn around and take up some of that love, its a wonderful thing - and then to be able to share it - that's all God wants.
AMEN

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Blessing

We come to a short prayer now:

Bountiful, loving Lord, you in your mercy, see each and every one of us. You know us all, so well, better than we know ourselves, better than we are prepared to admit very often. Oh, Lord, never let your love cease coming to us. We pray that we will always be ready and willing to accept all your love and to be able to share it with those we meet. Amen

Hymn: Go forth and tell

Go forth and tell!
O church of God, awake!
God's saving news
to all the nations take;
proclaim Christ Jesus, saviour, Lord, and king,
that all the world his glorious praise may sing.

Go forth and tell!
God's love embraces all;
he will in grace
respond to all who call:
how shall they call
if they have never heard
the gracious invitation
of his word?

Go forth and tell!
The doors are open wide:
share God's good gifts
let no one be denied;
live out your life as
Christ your Lord shall choose,
your ransomed powers
for his sole glory use.

Go forth and tell!
O church of God, arise!
go in the strength which
Christ your Lord supplies;
go till all nations
his great name adore
and serve him,
Lord and king for evermore.

James Seddon (1915 - 1983)

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