

MUC Sunday July 12, 2020 - Virtual

Chris (Candle lit and Bible open)

Welcome everyone to this service of worship, wherever you are, whatever time it is at your place.

Later in this service we will be celebrating Holy Communion. If you wish to participate please prepare some bread and a cup of water, juice or wine. You can pause the video now to do that and we will be here when you return." Thank you.

We acknowledge the first peoples of the land on which we worship. Here at Morialta on the Adelaide plains it was the Kaurna people. We give thanks for their custodianship of the land and recognise their deep spiritual relationship to it.

Call to Worship

Let us listen with ears of hope.
Let us hear with ears of wisdom.
Let us learn with hearts of faith,
moved by the word for us today.
For God speaks to us now, Christ calls us down the years
and the Spirit opens our minds and souls to the truth.
Let us worship God.

**Song TiS 158 God has spoken
God has spoken by his prophets,
spoken his unchanging word,
each from age to age proclaiming
God, the one, the righteous Lord.**

**In the world's despair and turmoil,
one firm anchor holds us fast:
God is king, his throne eternal,
God the first, and God the last.**

**God has spoken by Christ Jesus,
Christ, the everlasting Son,
brightness of the Father's glory,
with the Father ever one;**

**spoken by the Word incarnate,
God from God, ere time began,
Light from Light, to earth descending,
God, revealed as Son of Man.**

**God is speaking by his Spirit,
speaking to our hearts again,
in the age-long word expounding
God's own message, now as then,**

**through the rise and fall of nations
one sure faith yet standing fast,
God still speaks, his word unchanging,
God the first, and God the last.**

Prayer of Confession

Dear God, who is imaged in Jesus Christ for us to see,
when we are tempted to look at the lives of others
as though they have the same opportunities as we do,
ignoring the differences in beginnings and endings,
in support and nurture.
in circumstances and levels of struggle:
Forgive us and open our eyes to the truth, O God.

If we fail to search our hearts about the things
which distract us and seduce us in this life,
things which take away our dependence on you
and convince us that fullness of life lies in another direction,
diverting us from the real journey of faith:
Forgive us and open our eyes to the truth, O God.

When we simply go on without thinking deeply at all,
treating one day like any other,
complacently choosing to avoid struggling
with the big questions before us:
Forgive us and open our eyes to the truth, O God,
And bring us before you in a new way.
Amen.

Doug Words of Assurance

Even as we bring our confession before God,
the commitment of costly grace still stands.
There is indeed no condemnation for those who are in Christ.
We are forgiven!
This is the wondrous gift of God to us.
Amen.

Pam Readings: Psalm 119: 105 – 112 Matthew 13: 1 – 9, 18 – 23

Doug Sermon

When I read the Gospel lesson set for today my mind went back to the 60's and 70's when we lived in Papua New Guinea. Rabaul, on the Gazelle Peninsula, geologically is very young. The soil is volcanic and produces lush fruit and vegetables. I could go to the Market any time on a Saturday morning and buy a delicious pineapple for 10 cents, a pawpaw for 10 cents, a basket of tomatoes for 10 cents, a basket of kaukau (sweet potato) for 10 cents, a hand of bananas for 10 cents etc.

When we moved to Kavieng on New Ireland, the soil is very poor – a thin layer of soil on top of Karanas (coral). On a Saturday I had to be at the Market about 6.00am to purchase any fruit and vegetables that might be

their eg. 1 or 2 small tomatoes for 10 cents, a small pineapple, a few bananas for 10 or 20 cents.

In SA, after the drought and the bushfires, this year's good rains have most farmers looking forward to a good, even a very good harvest. But, of course as the farmers keep reminding us, "It is not ours until it is in the silos".

The Parable of the Sower is well known to us. After telling the parable Jesus said to the crowd, "Let anyone with ears, listen!".

Listen to what?

- That Jesus is indeed God's Chosen One
- That in Jesus, God has acted in a most decisive way.
- Jesus came to inaugurate God's kingdom here on earth
- How do we respond to this message?

Are we like the husband in various cartoons who sits at the breakfast table reading the morning paper (or these days, with his mobile phone or iPad) who, when addressed by his wife, merely grunts, not giving any attention to her?

Are we sometimes so preoccupied that we don't hear God speaking to us?

Matthew tells us that Jesus used parables to tell many things to the crowd who gathered around him.

As Jesus was telling this Parable of the Sower it is quite possible that he could see a Sower broadcasting the seed.

If there was a wind blowing, some of the seed would fall on the path and the birds would have a feast.

Some seed would fall where the soil was very shallow on top of rock and would not survive when the sun was hot.

Some seed would fall on ground where the roots of weeds were waiting to spring to life again, and the weeds would choke the grain. (look at some gardens here after the rains of the past few weeks).

And some seed fell in the good, clean soil, in the good ground, and it produced an abundant harvest.

The same seed produces no crop, some crops or much crop, according to the soil in which it falls.

Since the seed is likened to the “word of the kingdom”, then we are to understand that everyone hears it – both the crowds and the disciples.

In the verses of Chapter 13 which we skipped over the disciples question Jesus “Why do you use parables when you talk to the people?” Jesus says he speaks to everyone with varying results.

The challenge comes to us to ask ourselves: What kind of soil are we?

There are those whose hearts are hardened and who lose what little they have. They do not participate in the kingdom. For them, the parable is a threat.

There are those whose minds are like the shallow or stony ground. There are the people who fail to think things through – they are the people who follow every new craze, and just as quickly, drop it. Sadly, some people have enthusiastically responded to the Gospel in an emotional reaction. But the Christian faith is much more than an emotional reaction. Christianity has its demands, and these must be faced before it can be accepted.

There are other hearers of the Word who have so many interests in life that certain things, and often the most important things, get crowded out. Committee meetings, good works, visiting relative and friends – all have their place, but only after we have spent time with God and his Word.

Then there are those whose lives are like the good soil. These people have minds which are open, they are prepared to hear to understand, and translate the hearing into action.

This is also a parable to encourage the preachers of the Word. Sure, some seed is lost, but the lesson is clear in the climax of the parable – the harvest does come, the harvest is sure. Some produced 100 grains, others 60, others 30.

H L Gee tells the story that in the Church where he worshipped there was a lonely old man, Thomas. Thomas had outlived all his friends, and hardly anyone knew him. Thomas died. H L Gee had the feeling that there would be no one to go to the funeral, so he decided to go. There was no-one else, and it was a wild, wet day. The funeral reached the cemetery, it was during the War. At the gate a soldier was waiting. He was an Officer, but there weren't any rank badges on his raincoat. The soldier came to the graveside for the ceremony. When it was over, the soldier stepped forward and gave a salute that might have been given to a king.

H L Gee walked away with the soldier, and as they walked, the wind blew open the soldier's raincoat. Gee saw that he was a Brigadier.

The soldier said to Gee, "You are probably wondering what I'm doing here. Years ago, Thomas was my Sunday School teacher. I was a wild lad, and a severe trial to him, he never knew what he did for me, but I owe everything I am, or will be, to old Thomas, and today I had to come to salute him at the end."

The seed is being sown
The harvest is being gathered.
We are part of the sowing and harvesting.

1 Corinthians 3: 6. Paul "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth".

Verse 9: "We are God's servants working together."

This is, indeed, a word of encouragement to the whole congregation.
May God bless each one in our sowing, and harvesting.

Amen.

**Song TiS 597 Master speak
Master, speak! Thy servant heareth,
Waiting for Thy gracious word,
Longing for Thy voice that cheereth
Master, let it now be heard.
I am list'ning, Lord, for Thee;
What hast Thou to say to me?**

**Speak to me by name, O Master,
Let me know it is to me;
Speak, that I may follow faster,
With a step more firm and free,
Where the Shepherd leads the flock
In the shadow of the Rock!**

**Master, speak! and make me ready,
When Thy voice is truly heard,
With obedience glad and steady,
Still to follow every word
I am listening, Lord, for Thee:
Master, speak, oh, speak to me!**

Chris

**Prayers -
Offering dedication**

So many people give in so many ways to work of our church, to Christ's work, to God's work and for that we are grateful. We dedicate those gifts of time, energy, expertise and money to furthering that work in our local community and beyond. We pray that lives will be truly enhanced by our wise use of these gifts. Amen.

Prayers for others

Introduction

The lectionary readings for today concentrate on doing the will of God. We will use that intention in this prayer for others, so there will be some pauses for each of us to consider the circumstances mentioned and how we can each respond with the love of God.

Gracious God

We thank you for your word passed down through generations to us today. We pray for wisdom as we strive to interpret your will for us in our current circumstances. Sadly, we know that throughout history and even today some people use what they claim is your word to inflict pain, misery and hardship on others. And usually those others are among the most vulnerable, the poorest, the least able to defend themselves.

As Christians we look to the example and teachings of Jesus to guide our understanding of your will for us.

Where we see injustice, give us the courage to speak out against it and act to repair the damage done by it.

pause

For those whose homes, families, communities and livelihoods have been destroyed by war. May we find ways to support them.

pause

For refugees, may we treat them with compassion rather than punishing them further.

pause

For those who are different from us, may we only see their humanity and engage with them as equals.

pause

For those who struggle to cope with the pressures of modern life and our current circumstances, may we listen to them carefully and give them the time they need.

Pause

Gracious God, may we each in our own way contribute to the realisation of your will, here and now. As your servant C S Lewis pointed out, *"You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending."* May we work with dedication, courage and persistence towards that end.

Amen

Doug

Holy Communion The Invitation

This is the table,
not of the Church, but of the Lord.

It is provided for those who love God
and who want to love God more.

So, come,
those who have much faith
and those who have little,
those who have been here often and those who
have not been here for a long time,
those who have tried to follow
and those who have failed.

Come,
not because I invite you
it is our Lord.
It is the Lord's will and that those who follow Jesus
should meet our Lord here.
Now let us hear the story of how this sacrament began.

On the night when Jesus was betrayed,
he sat at the supper with the disciples.
While they were eating
he took a piece of bread,
said a blessing,
broke it and gave it to them with the word.

This is my body. It is broken for you,
Do this in remembrance of me

Later on he took a cup of wine, saying,

This cup is God's new covenant,
Sealed with my blood.
Drink from it all of you.
Do this in remembrance of me.

So now,
Following Jesus' example and command,
we take this bread and this wine,
the ordinary things of this world
which Christ will make special.
And as he said a prayer before sharing,
Let us do so too.

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

Lord Jesus Christ, present with us now,
for all that you have done
and all that you have promised,
what have we to offer?

Our hands are empty,
our hearts are sometimes full of wrong things
We are not fit to gather the crumbs
from under your table.
But it is your mercy

and the power to change us.

So as we do in this place
what you did in an upstairs room,
send down your Holy Spirit on us
and on these gifts of bread and wine,
that they may become for us your body,
healing, forgiving and making us whole,
and that we may become for you, your body,
loving and caring in the world
until your kingdom comes.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now
and for ever.
Amen

TAKING AND BREAKING BREAD

Among friends, gathered round a table,
Jesus took bread, broke it and said,

This is my body
it is broken for you.

TAKING THE CUP OF WINE

Later, he took the cup of wine and said,

This is the new relationship with God
made possible because of my death.
Take this – all of you.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Lord Jesus Christ,
you have put your life in our hands,
now we put our lives in yours.
Take us,
redeem us,
renew us.

Irrespective of what we have been,
it is what, with you we can be,
starting now. Amen.

Commissioning and Benediction

Let us go in faith carrying the gift of wisdom with us.
Let us go in peace as those who bring good news into the world.

And may life in all its beauty and colour be spread before us,
and the roots of our faith grow deep into the earth around us to be
a living testimony to the joy of the Holy God,
our Creator, Saviour and Comforter.
Amen.

Doug

**Song TiS 779 May the feet
May the feet of God walk with you,
and his hand hold you tight.
May the eye of God rest on you,
and his ear hear your cry.
May the smile of God be for you,
and his breath give you life.
May the Child of God grow in you,
and his love bring you home.**