



The Seventh Sunday after Trinity: 26th July

Take some time to be still, perhaps light a candle and offer your own prayer to God. You may find the following words helpful.

Father God, help us to come to you this morning with open and thankful hearts. Fill us with the joy and peace that comes with knowing you. Be with us as we walk in your light, rejoice in your love and reflect your glory.

Amen

Hymn 450: Morning has Broken

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BNf6GeyvUr8>

Morning has broken like the first morning
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird
Praise for the singing
Praise for the morning
Praise for them springing fresh from the Word

Sweet the rain's new fall, sunlit from heaven
Like the first dew fall on the first grass
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden
Sprung in completeness where His feet pass

Mine is the sunlight
Mine is the morning
Born of the One Light Eden saw play
Praise with elation, praise every morning
God's recreation of the new day

Morning has broken like the first morning
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird
Praise for the singing
Praise for the morning
Praise for them springing fresh from the Word

Welcome

The Lord be with you,
and also with you

Prayer of Preparation

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen

Prayer of Confession

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: The first commandment is this: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this: "Love your neighbour as yourself". There is no other commandment greater than these. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.**

**We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.**

**For the sake of your son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name.**

Amen

Lord have mercy

Lord have mercy

Christ have mercy

Christ have mercy

Lord have mercy

Lord have mercy

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in life eternal through

Jesus Christ our lord. **Amen**

Gloria

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father.

Amen.

Collect for today:

Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things: graft in our hearts the love of your name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of your great mercy keep us in the same; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen

Old Testament Reading: *Genesis 29: 15 - 28*

Laban said to him, 'Just because you are a relative of mine, should you work for me for nothing? Tell me what your wages should be.'

Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the elder one was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah had weak eyes, but Rachel had a lovely figure and was beautiful. Jacob was in love with Rachel and said, 'I'll work for you seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel.'

Laban said, 'It's better that I give her to you than to some other man. Stay here with me.' So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her. Then Jacob said to Laban, 'Give me my wife. My time is completed, and I want to make love to her.'

So Laban brought together all the people of the place and gave a feast. But when evening came, he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and Jacob made love to her. And Laban gave his servant Zilpah to his daughter as her attendant.

When morning came, there was Leah! So Jacob said to Laban, 'What is this you have done to me? I served you for Rachel, didn't I? Why have you deceived me?' Laban replied, 'It is not our custom here to give the younger daughter in marriage before the elder one. Finish this daughter's bridal week; then we will give you the younger one also, in return for another seven years of work.'

And Jacob did so. He finished the week with Leah, and then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife.

New Testament Reading: *Romans 8: 26 - end*

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written:

'For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Hymn 379: Lead Us Heavenly Father

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wqzau4v23m0>

Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us
through this world's tempestuous sea;
guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us
for your help is full and free,
here possessing every blessing
if our God our Father be.

Saviour, by your grace restore us -
all our weaknesses are plain;
you have lived on earth before us,
you have felt our grief and pain:
tempted, taunted, yet undaunted,
from the depths you rose again.

Spirit of our God, descending,
fill our hearts with holy peace;
love with every passion blending,
pleasure that can never cease:
thus provided, pardoned, guided,
ever shall our joys increase.

Gospel Reading: *Matthew 13: 31 – 33, 44 - 52*

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

Glory to you, O Lord

He told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.'

He told them still another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about thirty kilograms of flour until it worked all through the dough.'

'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.'

'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.'

'Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

'Have you understood all these things?' Jesus asked. 'Yes,' they replied. He said to them, 'Therefore every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ

Sermon: Revd. Petra Shakeshaft

I wonder, what is the kingdom of heaven like?

These parables are the imaginative stories Jesus uses to encourage us to think about something way beyond our imagination. *The kingdom of heaven, says Jesus, is like a mustard seed* with potential for amazing growth. That seed of faith planted in each one of us; that image of God in which we are made which grows and flourishes in prayer and scripture making and moulding us more like that image. We become more God-like, more kingdom-like. We offer our branches to all the birds of the air and they come to build their nests – ALL the birds of the air are welcome. And we might be reminded of something in the prophets ...(Ezekiel 17. 23, Ezekiel 31. 6, Daniel 4. 12) another tree where all the birds of the air are welcomed – the tree as a symbol of a kingdom, Israel, into whose branches all the nations are drawn together. The kingdom of heaven is hospitable. There is no room for prejudice or exclusion in the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven welcomes all.

The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened. Again, it's not hard to follow the imagery – yeast, even a small amount, makes dough grow. But you may remember the story of Abraham's visitors a few weeks back and the same three measures of flour Sarah took to make bread for them. Enough for a banquet; a heavenly banquet maybe. Again, Jesus refers back to the scriptures in his imagery – something familiar. The kingdom of heaven is generous beyond measure.

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, like a pearl of great price. It is more precious than all else you have. Sister Pia Buxton, was a Roman Catholic nun who ran a School of Prayer for this parish back in 1987. At the penultimate meeting she suggested a party for the following week, '*Only,*' she said, '*you'll have to bring everything because I have nothing.*' It was a humbling moment for all of us. She was and remains the most serene, prayerful, joyful person I have ever met. It is not everyone's calling to give up everything and join a Christian community, but there is a lesson here in sitting light with our worldly goods and chattels and perhaps never more so than at a time like this, when we are reminded daily of the fragility of life itself and the potential for all our human-built castles to come tumbling down in a moment. The kingdom of heaven is precious.

The treasure and the pearl remind us that real treasure is sometimes stumbled across, hidden in the field of everyday life and the people we come across, or something we search and search for and when we find it we are drawn to make those sacrifices necessary to hold on to it. In the Old Testament reading set for this morning, we are reminded by Solomon that the greatest treasure is the Wisdom of God. Again, Jesus refers his audience back to the wisdom held in the Scriptures.

Last week we heard the parable of the wheat and tares and *its* partner is the parable of the great fishing net. Both address the problem of living alongside the evils of the world and the mixed reception of the gospel – those who get it and those who don't and, most importantly, that *judgement is not ours, but God's.* We must wait patiently for the wheat and tares to grow to maturity and for the fullness of time; that is, when the net is full and God will make all things right.

Now this is not an excuse to sit back and let it all happen or to accept all that is wrong with the world. We are still called to bring in the kingdom; to make the world welcoming and hospitable and generous like the mustard tree and the yeast, to call for justice and equity, peace and love, an end to war, oppression, prejudice, corruption and lies to make the world as like the kingdom of heaven as we can.

This message of patient waiting is important today when so much suffering is the result of perceived difference and fear of religion, colour, ethnicity and identity, or human craving for power, greed and corruption. Lies are peddled as truth and appalling behaviour accepted, even normalised. We see pain all around us. We are quick to make judgements about people and want to settle scores; and it's satisfying to think those we deem to be corrupt and evil or Godless will end up in the fiery furnace; But the message is, it's not for us to judge – thankfully, because we are much harsher judges than God. Remember - God knows the secrets of *all* our hearts, and that's what we should be taking care of.

Like the wheat and tares and the fish of every kind, we live in the presence of the evils of this world and must resist them. That resistance is what makes us grow to maturity, makes us resilient and strong in faith, draws our roots deep down into the good soil God has prepared for us; the good soil that is the Scripture that Jesus points to, over and over again, the good soil that is prayer and relationship with God and community. And, as we grow the kingdom around us, it's just possible that those strange fish in the net and the weeds in the field may also be drawn into the kingdom. In the end, God's judgement will make all things good. These are, as St Paul puts it, the birth-pangs, the groanings of creation as God brings forth something new.

*For - Who will separate us from the love of Christ?
Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine,
or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

*No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.
For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers,
nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,
nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.*

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers

Almighty God, thank you for the Holy Spirit who intercedes for us according to your will, when we do not even know what we should pray for.

Thank you, because nothing in the present, or in the future can separate us from the great, transforming love you have for us.

Thank you for our risen Lord Jesus.

God, our heavenly Father, we pray for our community, thanking you for a respite from the Covid 19 infection in the area at the moment. Bring healing to the sick. Bring comfort to the dying and hope to those who have been bereaved.

As life is opening up for us all please help people to find the right balance between confidence and vigilance, for the sake of others.

We commit to your keeping all the churches in Sawston and Babraham. We pray that we and all our brothers and sisters in Christ, may rest in the knowledge of your past faithfulness. Equip us for new ways of working, so that the gospel may continue to be made known and the kingdom of heaven may spread and grow in this place.

Thank you for our national leaders. Guide them in their great responsibilities. Give them wisdom in decision-making over Brexit arrangements, the future of the economy, and the health of the people of this nation. May the voices of our leaders be voices for justice and freedom in the world.

Thank you for clearly showing us that people right across the world are all inter-dependent. Thank you for teaching us too how fragile the eco-systems are, on which we depend.

Lord, change our hearts, so that we may change the way we live and the way we relate to one another. Help us, as your people, to set our hearts on the treasure of infinite value. Your kingdom come, your will be done *on earth* as it is in heaven.

Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

The Peace:

Take a moment and offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God for each other and our church family church community. Maybe call or text someone who would enjoy sharing the peace with you.

May the God of peace make you perfect and holy, that you may be kept safe and blameless in spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

Hymn 409: Lord for the Years

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkTrFQLy6js>

Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided,
urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,
sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided:
Lord of the years, we bring our thanks today.

Lord, for that word, the word of life which fires us,
speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze,
teaches and trains, rebukes us and inspires us:
Lord of the word, receive Your people's praise.

Lord, for our land in this our generation,
spirits oppressed by pleasure, wealth and care:
for young and old, for commonwealth and nation,
Lord of our land, be pleased to hear our prayer.

Lord, for our world when we disown and doubt him,
loveless in strength, and comfortless in pain,
hungry and helpless, lost indeed without him:
Lord of the world, we pray that Christ may reign.

Lord for ourselves; in living power remake us -
self on the cross and Christ upon the throne,
past put behind us, for the future take us:
Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone.

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.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours.
Now and for ever.
Amen.**

Hymn 222: God Moves in a Mysterious Way

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d04rK-OljW8>

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform
He plants His footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm

Deep in unsearchable mines
Of never failing skill
He treasures up His bright designs
And works His sovereign will

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take
The clouds you so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break
In blessings, in blessings
In blessings on your head

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense
But trust Him for His grace
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face

His purposes will ripen fast
Unfolding every hour
The bud may have a bitter taste
But sweet will be the flower

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take
The clouds you so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break
In blessings, in blessings
In blessings on your head

Blind unbelief is sure to err
And scan His work in vain
God is His own interpreter
And He will make it plain

Remembering the Lord's Supper:

Take a moment to remember the final meal that Jesus shared with his disciples. As we think about this meal - with the washing of feet and bread and wine shared with friends - we remember Jesus' offering of himself on the cross. We rejoice in his resurrection from the dead and look forward to the coming of God's Kingdom. While we cannot receive Christ in the sacraments in the usual way, we can be the presence of Christ in our homes and communities and we can be a praying presence wherever we are.

Hymn 70: Be Thou My Vision

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6AdBkEJurR4>

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that thou art -
Thou my best thought, by day or by night;
Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word;
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord.
Thou my great Father; thine own may I be,
Thou in me dwelling and I one with thee.

Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise;
Thou mine inheritance, now and always;
Thou and thou only first in my heart,
High King of heaven, my treasure thou art.

High King of heaven, my victory won,
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

Closing Prayer:

Lord God, we thank you for this time of worship; may your love and peace remain with us in the coming days. Be with us in all that we will think, say and do so that our lives may reflect your glory. We ask this in the name of your Son Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

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

If you have any prayer or pastoral needs, please don't hesitate to contact

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