**Morning Prayer on Sunday 12thJuly – The Fifth Sunday after Trinity**

**Preparation**

O Lord, open our lips

**and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

Bless the Lord all you works of the Lord:

sing and praise and exalt him for ever.

Bless the Lord you heavens:

sing his praise and exalt him for ever.

Bless the Lord you angels of the Lord:

sing his praise and exalt him for ever.

**Thanksgiving Prayer**

Blessed are you, creator of all,

to you be praise and glory for ever.

As your dawn renews the face of the earth

bringing life and life to all creation,

may we rejoice in this day you have made;

As we wake refreshed from the depths of sleep,

open our eyes to behold your presence

and strengthen our hands to do your will,

that the world may rejoice and give you praise.

Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**Blessed by God for ever.**

**Bless the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit;**

**sing his praise and exalt him for ever.**

This opening prayer may be said

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us;

let us pray with one heart and mind.

Silence is kept.

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,

so may the light of your presence, O God,

set our hearts on fire with love for you;

now and for ever.

**Amen.**

**The Word of God**

***Psalm 65.[1-7]8-13***

[1 Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion; \* to you that answer prayer shall vows be paid. 2 To you shall all flesh come to confess their sins; \* when our misdeeds prevail against us, you will purge them away. 3 Happy are they whom you choose and draw to your courts to dwell there. \* We shall be satisfied with the blessings of your house, even of your holy temple. 4 With wonders you will answer us in your righteousness, O God of our salvation, \* O hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas. 5 In your strength you set fast the mountains \* and are girded about with might. 6 You still the raging of the seas, \* the roaring of their waves and the clamour of the peoples. 7 Those who dwell at the ends of the earth tremble at your marvels; \* the gates of the morning and evening sing your praise. 8 You visit the earth and water it; \* you make it very plenteous. 9 The river of God is full of water; \* you prepare grain for your people, for so you provide for the earth. 10 You drench the furrows and smooth out the ridges; \* you soften the ground with showers and bless its increase. 11 You crown the year with your goodness, \* and your paths overflow with plenty. 12 May the pastures of the wilderness flow with goodness \* and the hills be girded with joy. 13 May the meadows be clothed with flocks of sheep \* and the valleys stand so thick with corn that they shall laugh and sing.]

**Glory to the Father and to the Son**

**and to the Holy Spirit;**

**as it was in the beginning is now**

**and shall be for ever. Amen.**

**Canticle**

**A Song of David**

**Splendour and majesty are your, O God;**

**you are exalted as head over all.**

Blessed are you, God of Israel, for ever and ever,

for yours is the greatness, the power,

the glory, the splendour and the majesty.

Everything in heaven and on earth is yours;

yours is the kingdom, O Lord,

and you are exalted as head over all.

Riches and honour come from you

and you rule over all.

In your hand are power and might;

yours it is to give power and strength to all.

And now we give you thanks, our God,

and praise your glorious name.

For all things come from you,

and of your own have we given you.

**Glory to the Father and to the Son**

**and to the Holy Spirit;**

**as it was in the beginning is now**

**and shall be for ever. Amen.**

**Splendour and majesty are yours, O God;**

**you are exalted as head over all.**

Scripture Reading

***Isaiah 55.10-13***

Thus says the LORD: 10 As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, 11 so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it. 12 For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. 13 Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to the LORD for a memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

***Romans 8.1-11***

1 There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. 3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. 6 To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. 7 For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law—indeed it cannot, 8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. 10 But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead.

**And Christ shall give you light.**

You have died and your life is hid with Christ in God.

**Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead.**

Set your minds on things that are above,

not on things that are on the earth.

**And Christ shall give you light.**

When Christ our life appears

you will appear with him in glory.

**Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead,**

**And Christ shall give you light.**

Gospel Canticle

**You have raised up for us a mighty Saviour,**

**born of the house of your servant David.**

Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel,

who has come to his people and set them free.

He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour,

born of the house of his servant David.

Through his holy prophets God promised of old

to save us from our enemies,

from the hands of all that hate us,

To show mercy to our ancestors,

and to remember his holy covenant.

This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham:

to set us free from the hands of our enemies,

Free to worship him without fear,

holy and righteous in his sights

all the days of our life.

And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,

for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,

To give his people knowledge of salvation

by the forgiveness of all their sins.

In the tender compassion of our God

the dawn from on high shall break upon us,

To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death,

and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

**Glory to the Father and to the Son**

**and to the Holy Spirit;**

**as it was in the beginning is now**

**and shall be for ever. Amen.**

**You have raised up for us a mighty Saviour,**

**born of the house of your servant David.**

**Gospel Reading**

*Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew*

*(13.1 -9, 18-23)*

*All* **Glory to you, O Lord**

1 Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake. 2 Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. 3 And he told them many things in parables, saying: ‘Listen! A sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. 5 Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. 6 But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. 7 Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. 8 Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9 Let anyone with ears listen!

18 Hear then the parable of the sower. 19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. 20 As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21 yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. 22 As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. 23 But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.’

**Praise to you, O Christ**

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

**12/7/20 COVID 19**

Some years ago I had the great privilege of being able to visit the Holy Land as indeed some of you may have done, if not you may well have seen pictures of the sea of Galilee. It is a vast expanse of water, and we are told that Jesus got into a boat in order to teach the vast crowds that gathered around him, which may seem quite odd to us but the shape of the shoreline acts almost like an amphitheatre and would have allowed Jesus’ voice to be carried to the many who had come to hear him. There’s another, I think fascinating detail in the beginning of this passage. We are told that the crowds stood on the beach, which again may seem odd to us but in Jesus’ culture teachers sat down and pupils stood up. So the crowd were in fact acknowledging Jesus as a teacher, someone they wanted to learn from. The crowds flocked to see Jesus because they were perhaps beginning to think that he may be the Messiah, that the time of judgement may indeed be coming when God would rescue his chosen people. I can’t help wondering what the crowds thought as they heard Jesus tell this parable. It almost certainly wasn’t what they expected to hear. They probably came to hear Jesus tell them about how this great recue of God’s people would happen and what they hear instead is a slightly confusing story about lots of seed falling into different types of ground, some of it being blown away, some growing up to be choked by thistles and others taking root and bearing fruit. Then Jesus tells them let those who have ears hear, what did it all mean?

In the second half of our Gospel reading we have the explanation of the parable, but I think Jesus is saying something else to the crowd as well. I think he is saying that which you have been looking for is within your grasp but you have to take hold of it, to figure it out, to understand what God is really doing.

For the crowd being presented with this parable it may have felt a bit like being in a maze and they’d suddenly found their way blocked. They’d come to listen to the Messiah who was going to tell them about God’s kingdom and the day of judgement, he was going to lead them into that glorious day and then suddenly he’s talking about a very wasteful farmer, scattering seeds all over the place and only some of them bearing fruit. A puzzle indeed! My suspicion is that we tend to interpret this parable on one level. We think of the seeds in terms of people who fail to hear god’s word or those who do hear it but allow other things to get in the way and then we think of the seed that bears fruit as those who commit their lives to Christ and obviously at one level that is correct. But I don’t think it stops there, I think the challenge of this parable for us is on-going. I think that even when we have made a commitment to Christ there can be times in our lives when we fail to hear what God is saying to us, or when we may think that we have heard God’s voice, but it get’s drowned out by the noise of other things or perhaps times when we know what God wants us to do but other things get in the way, and then there can be times when we know that we are hearing God’s voice, following the path that he wants us to take and when we can see the fruits of that. Jesus wanted his hearers to take his words away and ponder them and then come back to hear more. We also need to take away Jesus’ words, study this parable and perhaps ask God to point out the areas in our lives that are bearing fruit for him and perhaps also the areas that might need gently digging over and re-planting to enable the word of God to take root in our lives, to grow and to bear fruit. Amen.

**Prayers**

Blessed are you, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing.

You have destined us for the glorious freedom

of the children of God.

You have given us of your love and of yourself.

May we rejoice in your rule

and in the coming of your kingdom.

Blessed are you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

one God for ever and ever.

Father, we give you thanks for John the Baptist

and the way he stood against an evil regime.

We thank you for the gift of your kingdom to us.

We rejoice in our freedom

and the freedom of our Church and country.

We ask that your Church may reflect your love

in the way it cares for the outcast and the needy.

We remember all who are persecuted for their faith

or for making a stand against evil.

We pray especially for Christians who are seeking

to improve corrupt societies and governments.

Silence

Show us your loving kindness, O Lord,

**and grant us your salvation.**

We give you thanks for the work of the United Nations

and its efforts to bring peace and unity to our world.

We pray for all who are caught up in war and violence.

We remember those who have lost loved ones

and those who do not know where their loved ones are.

We ask your blessing o the work of Amnesty International

and all who risk their lives for the freedom of others.

Silence

Show us your loving kindness, O Lord,

**and grant us your salvation.**

Father, may our homes reflect the love and unity of your kingdom.

Bless our families and friends with the joy of your presence.

We ask your love to strengthen all who are in homes

where there is oppression and where lives are not valued.

Silence

Show us your loving kindness, O Lord,

**and grant us your salvation.**

God, we thank you for the freedom you have won for us

in our Saviour Jesus Christ.

We remember before you all who are slaves to sin and vice.

We pray for drug addicts, alcoholics,

those who gamble away their lives.

We remember also those who are imprisoned

by their illness or incapacity

and who long for a fuller and richer life.

Silence

Show us your loving kindness, O Lord,

**and grant us your salvation.**

Lord, we pray for the time when your kingdom will come

on earth as it is in heaven.

We long for justice and freedom for all peoples.

We join our prayers with our loved ones departed

and all your saints,

praying that we may all know your rule

and enjoy your presence.

Silence

Merciful Father,

**accept these prayers**

**for the sake of your Son,**

**our Saviour Jesus Christ.**

**Amen.**

The Collect for the Day

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified; hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people, that in their vocation and ministry they may serve you in holiness and truth to the glory of your name, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, ow and for ever.

The Lord’s Prayer is said

Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name,

thy kingdom come, thy will be done

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,

and forgive us our trespasses, as we

forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and

the glory, for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

**The Conclusion**

The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil,

and keep us in eternal life.

**Amen.**

Let us bless the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**