

Sunday 12 July 2020



The Fifth Sunday after Trinity

TODAY'S SERVICES

All our churches are closed, in line with the Church of England and Government coronavirus / Covid 19 guidelines.

The Church of England is producing a series of prayers and acts of worship for those unable to attend church, available here <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-liturgy-and-prayer-resources>.

The readings and collect and a sermon for today are below, which you can also use in the week ahead.

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Romans 8:1-11

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. ³ For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ⁵ Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. ⁶ The mind governed by the flesh is death, but

the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷ The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸ Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. ⁹ You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. ¹¹ And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. ² Such large crowds gathered round him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. ³ Then he told them many things in parables, saying: 'A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴ As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵ Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. ⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop – a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. ⁹ Whoever has ears, let them hear.' ¹⁸ 'Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: ¹⁹ when anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. ²⁰ The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹ But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. ²² The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²³ But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.'

Collect for the Fifth Sunday after Trinity

Almighty God, send down upon your Church the riches of your Spirit, and kindle in all who minister the gospel your countless gifts of grace; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let us pray:

Lord of my darkest place:

Let in your light.

Lord of my greatest fear:

Let in your peace.

Lord of my most bitter shame:

Let in your forgiveness.

Lord of my deepest anger:

Let it out.

Lord of my loneliest moment:

Let in your presence.

Lord of my truest self – my all:

Let in your wholeness.

Alison Pepper

Grant us a vision, Lord,

To see what we can achieve;

To reach out beyond ourselves,

To share our lives with others,

To stretch our capabilities,

To increase our sense of purpose,

To be aware of where we can help,

To be sensitive to your presence,

To give heed to your constant call

David Adam

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy in this time of uncertainty and distress. Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may rejoice in your comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Our YouTube channel is:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDx266HLh9ShYeBjN8ODg>

Look for this week’s services.

Homily: Rev’d Vincent Radford

Good morning everyone. Shall we pray

Heavenly Father, help us to listen to your Word with understanding, to receive it with faith, and to obey it with courage, for Jesus Christ’s sake. *Amen.*

Aren’t seeds amazing things! Tiny, some absolutely minute, shrivelled, hard, apparently lifeless, yet packed with the potential for vigorous life and growth, enormous strength and amazing beauty. At home, we get through large quantities of them each month at our garden feeding station, because, of course, they also provide food for other creatures. (birds in particular.) And don’t the birds enjoy them: kindly expressing their gratitude all over our car at regular intervals.

If you buy a packet of seeds for your garden, it usually comes with a set of growing instructions. Despite careful preparation of the soil and diligent follow-up work –there is always a percentage of waste – some seeds fail to germinate, others, having germinated, wither and others are accidentally weeded out by a too vigorously applied hoe (said he, looking at Christine!)

Those listening to Jesus would probably have had more personal knowledge of seedtime and harvest than we do in our modern urban society, and would all, at the very least, have watched farmers sowing their crops. They would have known where to plant and where to avoid and the hard work involved in the cultivation process.

So why, since his listeners knew all that, did Jesus bother to point it out?

The answer is, of course, that Jesus was not really talking about agriculture. He was using a familiar situation to give a message –for those who were prepared to think about it.

It is clear that the sower is God. And the seed is the gospel message that, on the cross, Jesus took our sins onto his shoulders and paid the penalty for them. He rose again and makes it possible for us also to enjoy life after death. Because of Jesus, we can live in a personal relationship with God, if we will turn away from all that is wrong in our lives and make a new start.

The soil into which the seed of the Gospel message is sown is the human heart. Just as the condition of the soil determines whether or not a seed will take, so the condition of a person’s heart when he or she hears that gospel message determines whether or not that person will respond.

Seed falling on hard earth is blown away or eaten up. If a person’s heart is hard, they don’t allow the wonderful message of the gospel to change it; they refuse to listen.

The seed of the Gospel cannot penetrate the soil of their heart. Such a person can't make the connection between the claims of the Gospel and their own life – they are not willing to change. When this happens, the devil has an easy task to distract them and divert their minds so that they become even more hardened against God.

Some people respond to faith by initially being wildly enthusiastic but it soon wears off. They make all kinds of promises to God, but quickly forget about them, especially if they find themselves out of step with the rest of the world because of their faith. They are long on excitement but short on commitment. Their lack of staying power condemns them. They wither and die.

Others receive the message and do respond, only to find that the pressures of modern life push the demands of faith to one side. We might have faith, but we find we are too busy to pray, so preoccupied with other worldly things that we forget to study the Bible. Jesus is not deliberately left out, but we never quite get round to him. We overlook the fact that God can and will help us if we put our trust and our lives into his hands. We forget what we once knew, what is really important in life.

But there *are* those whose hearts provide fertile soil. Those who not only hear the gospel message but take it to heart and act upon it, who make room in their hearts and lives for God, who know what their priorities should be. These people have open minds – they are always willing to hear, and not too proud or too busy to listen. Such people understand and translate their understanding into action. The real hearers listen, understand and obey. And their lives are productive. By their example they demonstrate God's love in action; they attract others and spread the gospel message. They live full lives, secure in God's love and confident of his mercy. They are not inward looking or selfish, but outward looking and selfless. They possess God-given strength.

So, the 4 types of soil, that Jesus talked about, represent different human responses. What kind of soil are you? Don't forget, the seed is always there, we just have to make sure that we are the right kind of soil and that bearing good fruit may cause us some effort.

Just as a tiny, growing seed has the power to crack a large rock, reading the bible and the good news that it contains (of what Jesus did for us on the cross) can and does transform lives, if we let it. Not something to keep to yourself but such good news should be celebrated and shared with others.

Shall we pray,

Lord, we ask you to fill us with your Holy Spirit and help us to be fertile soil in which your Word can grow, blossom and spread.

Amen

Do contact us if we can offer any help or support at this time.

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Team Vicar: Revd Angela Wynne 01204 468150

Subject to the approval of the PCC:

On Sunday 19 July, at 9.30a.m. Sunday worship will resume at St. John's!

It will be different!

You are very welcome to attend, but we ask that you respect the guidance given on arrival.
Thank you and God bless you.

Vicar and Church Wardens.

Bolton's Humanitarian Food Hub is led by Bolton Council and supported by many organisations including Urban Outreach, Bolton at Home, Seddon's and Bolton CVS. We are organising collections again in our parishes. If you would like to make a donation, here are the details of where you can drop off items.

Saturdays 11th July, 25th July, 8th August, 22nd August 10 am – 11 am
St John's Church Wingates, outside or porch area.
St James' Church Daisy Hill, outside or porch area.
Car park adjacent to St Bartholomew's Church

At any time: Blackrod Vicarage door step
c/o James Wilson, 13 Bellwood Westhoughton BL5 3RT

Current Priority Items jars of baby food (different ages), Incontinence pads, male toiletries, Size 5 and 6 nappies Wipes, **Tinned** meat, veg, chopped tomatoes, fruit, 500g boxes of breakfast cereal, Cordial, Long life milk, Custard powder **Also needed**, 1kg bags of rice, Pasta (500g), Baked beans, Tinned soup, Jars of pasta sauce, Tinned pulses, Tinned vegetables (sweetcorn, peas, carrots and potatoes), Biscuits, Tinned fish, Tea

