



The sixth Sunday after TRINITY 12th July 2026

In the name of the + Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

The Greeting

Grace, mercy, and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

HYMN

Light's abode, celestial Salem,
vision whence true peace doth spring,
brighter than the heart can fancy,
mansion of the highest King;
O how glorious are the praises
which of thee the prophets sing!

There for ever and for ever
alleluia is outpoured;
for unending, for unbroken
is the feast-day of the Lord;
all is pure and all is holy
that within thy walls is stored.

There no cloud nor passing vapour
dims the brightness of the air;
endless noonday, glorious noonday,
from the Sun of suns is there;
there no night brings rest from labour,
for unknown are toil and care

O how glorious and resplendent,
fragile body, shalt thou be,
when endued with heavenly beauty,
full of health, and strong, and free,
full of vigour, full of pleasure
that shall last eternally!

Now with gladness, now with courage,
bear the burden on thee laid,
that hereafter these thy labours
may with endless gifts be paid,
and in everlasting glory
thou with bright be arrayed

Laud and honor to the Father,
laud and honor to the Son,
laud and honor to the Spirit,
ever Three and ever One,
consubstantial, co-eternal,
while unending ages run.

Invitations to Confession

'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty.'
We long for the fire of God's cleansing
to touch our unclean lips,
for our guilt to be removed and our sin wiped out.
So we meet Father, Son and Holy Spirit
with repentance in our hearts.

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.

Absolution

Almighty God,
Who in Jesus Christ has given us
a kingdom that cannot be destroyed
Forgive us our sins, +
open our eyes to God's truth,
strengthen us to do God's will
and give us the joy of his kingdom,
through Jesus Christ our lord.
Amen

The Collect

Merciful God,
you have prepared for those who love you
such good things as pass our understanding:
pour into our hearts such love toward you
that we, loving you in all things and above all things,
may obtain your promises,
which exceed all that we can desire;
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

A reading from the Old Testament
Isaiah 55. 10-13

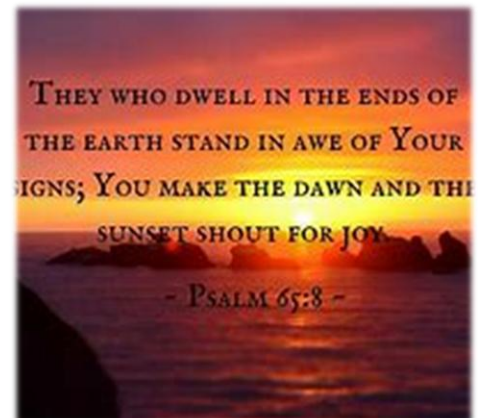
¹⁰ As the rain and the snow
come down from heaven, and do not return to it
without watering the earth
and making it bud and flourish,
so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,
¹¹ so is my word that goes out from my mouth:
It will not return to me empty,
but will accomplish what I desire
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.
¹² You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace;
the mountains and hills
will burst into song before you,
and all the trees of the field
will clap their hands.
¹³ Instead of the thornbush will grow the juniper,
and instead of briars the myrtle will grow.

This will be for the LORD's renown,
for an everlasting sign,
that will endure forever."
This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Psalm 65

- 1 Praise awaits you, our God, in Zion;
to you our vows will be fulfilled.
- 2 You who answer prayer,
to you all people will come.
- 3 When we were overwhelmed by sins,
you forgave our transgressions.
- 4 Blessed are those you choose
and bring near to live in your courts!
We are filled with the good things of your house,
of your holy temple.
- 5 You answer us with awesome and righteous deeds,
God our Savior,
the hope of all the ends of the earth
and of the farthest seas,
- 6 who formed the mountains by your power,
having armed yourself with strength,
- 7 who stilled the roaring of the seas,
the roaring of their waves,
and the turmoil of the nations.
- 8 The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders;
where morning dawns, where evening fades,
you call forth songs of joy.
- 9 You care for the land and water it;
you enrich it abundantly.
The streams of God are filled with water
to provide the people with grain,
for so you have ordained it.
- 10 You drench its furrows and level its ridges;
you soften it with showers and bless its crops.
- 11 You crown the year with your bounty,
and your carts overflow with abundance.
- 12 The grasslands of the wilderness overflow;
the hills are clothed with gladness.
- 13 The meadows are covered with flocks
and the valleys are mantled with grain;
they shout for joy and sing.

May the richness of your creation, Lord, and the mystery of your providence
lead us to that heavenly city where all peoples will bring their wealth,
forsake their sins and find their true joy, Jesus Christ our Lord.



8 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.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

HYMN

O Holy Spirit, Lord of grace,
eternal Fount of love,
in flame, we pray, our inmost hearts
with fire from heaven above

As thou in bond of love dost join
the Father and the Son,
so fill us all with mutual love,
and knit our hearts in one

All glory to the Father be,
all glory to the Son,
all glory, Holy Ghost, to thee,
while endless ages run.

The Gospel

Matthew 13. 1-9, 18-23

13 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. 2 Such large crowds gathered around 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."

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. Welcome with meekness the implanted word
That has the power to save your souls
Alleluia

This is the Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you O Christ

Reflection

This parable of the sower suffers from the fact that it is so familiar that we barely hear it. Yet it is one of the few parables for which we have Jesus' explanation, so I guess we ought to give it our attention.

All of Jesus teaching centred on one thing, the Kingdom of God. He prefaced many of his parables with the words "...the kingdom of God is like... wheat and weeds in a field, a mustard seed, yeast in bread, a treasure in a field, a pearl of great price". Many of these parables focus on a response required from us required to be part of this kingdom. The man buys a field, the merchant a pearl.

What is the Kingdom of God? We pray for it every time we say the Lord's Prayer. It is that state of being where God's will is perfectly done. It is not heaven, it is of the earth. 'Thy kingdom come... on earth ... as in heaven. Thus this concept is for the now, and is vitally personal.

We pray that the kingdom of God will come in us, in you in me. You will remember Jesus saying that his kingdom was not of this world, but of God and that the kingdom was within us. So the idea of the Kingdom of God must always be thought of on these two levels. The ultimate outcome of the created order, and our lives.

All that said, let us look again at the parable. What is this seed that this careless farmer throws about? That would have immediately grabbed their attention; seed was precious, you took care where it landed.

Jesus describes it as the 'word of the kingdom', – but I don't think we can limit it to the written word of the scriptures although that is obviously a part. How do we hear the 'word of the kingdom?' It comes to us in many ways, but we must be alert to recognise it, sensitised to it so you begin to see it everywhere. Similar to the way if you were about to buy a new car you start to that model everywhere.

What are these many ways? Nature, kindness of friends and strangers, beauty, goodness, truth, but also the still small voice that you alone hear, that one that calls you to change, to have courage, to take action, to enter life.

We might think of the seed and its extravagant dispersal akin to the amazing surge-like wave of God's love towards us.

What difference would it make to believe that we are each and together, held by God in a wholly loving gaze. A gaze which sees all our surface accidents and arrangements, all our inner habits and inheritances, all our anxieties and arrogances, all our history and yet a gaze which nevertheless loves that whole tangled bundle which make you, you and me, me.

A loving gaze that sees all the twists and distortions of my messy self, all the harm that it can do and has done, but also that which was and is good. Further sees all that it could become, all that it could give to others and all that it could receive. And it is an utterly free, utterly selfless love? This is the extravagance of the 'word of the kingdom'; it is just scattered in this profligate manner, just out there.

But a response from us is required. Why? Because God who is love has given us freewill, it is the essence of love to allow the freedom of the other. No coercion, we are invited to join that movement of love which is God.

This is why Jesus ends with these strange words. "Let anyone with ears listen!"

The temptation when hearing this is to think that this warning applies to other people, to people who have not heard the Gospel, the good news of Jesus.

They are the ones who need to hear this. We, of course, have ears to hear, or so we think. For us, to defend ourselves in this way from Jesus's challenge means already we have closed our ears to God's shattering judgement.

The process of being given ears to hear, to move from the world's noise, is long and painful; a process whereby we are stripped of our selfishness and polished into mirrors to reflect the love of God.

In the process we may relax along the stony path or amongst the weeds and rest content with the current state of our relationship with God and the concepts with which we describe God. We 'fall asleep' when we are called to be alert to the movement of the Kingdom.

Recognising this, should we then throw up our hands and admit we know nothing of God and we fail to hear and don't know how to be fruitful in good soil?

To say that would be to take back all that we know of God through Jesus of Nazareth, all that we know through the love we have recognised so far. To say that is to try and halt the great wave of love which is always coming towards us over which we have no control.

Our journey into God will always be restless, with attendant breaking and remaking of all our images and understanding but with ears to listen we are drawn on. It is a journey into God's love, into God's life, into all that is opened to us in Jesus.

We have to allow, accept, and welcome that wave to break over us in loving regard and allow that belief to percolate down through all the layers of our awareness. It is this that will hold us.

To believe ourselves held in such unbounded acceptance is utterly disarming.

The 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.

Intercessions

God whom we call Abba, Father, the source of all that is.
We give you thanks for our creation, preservation and all the blessings of this life.
We pray for our beautiful world and ask that you will open not only our eyes
but also our minds that we will see afresh its wonder,
our place within it, and our responsibility for its care.

Jesus, our Lord, brother and friend.
Your life on earth showed us the Father's love
and by your death, resurrection, and ascension, you draw us into the life of the Kingdom..
We pray that you will help us understand all that you have done for us.

Holy Spirit of God our advocate, teacher and guide.
Open our ears to hear, lead us into truth and change us.
We pray that you will create and increase within us the fruit of your presence.
That we may increase in love, joy, and peace, in our relationship with you;
that we may show patience, kindness, goodness, in our relations with others, and
faithfulness, gentleness and self-control within ourselves.

We pray for those known to us in any need, sickness, trouble or any other adversity,
asking that they may know peace and comfort in their differing needs....
We pray for those who have died this night.
We pray for those who have died recently and for those who may be in shock as well as grief.
We remember with gratitude our own dead who are dear to us who enriched our lives and live in your
love. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

And we pray for our own needs...
Let us commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray,
to the mercy and protection of God.

Being made one by the power of the Spirit,
as our Saviour taught us, so we pray.

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

God of our pilgrimage,
you have led us to the living water:
refresh and sustain us
as we go forward on our journey,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

Blessings and Ending

The God of all grace
Who called you to his eternal glory in Christ Jesus
Establish, strengthen, and settle you in the faith
And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
Be with us and remain with us always.
Amen

HYMN

Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven, to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.

Come, almighty to deliver,
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never,
nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation;
pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee:
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise.