

Into his Courts with Praise...



A Service of the Word
for
Sunday 19 July 2026
Seventh Sunday after Trinity.

A Service of the Word for Sunday morning

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INTRODUCTION

"Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn."

Matthew 13:30.



THE CONFESSION

The grace of God has dawned upon the world with healing for all. Though we have grieved him, yet he will heal us if we confess our sins in penitence and faith.

**Almighty God,
I confess that I have sinned against you
in thought, word and deed;
I have not loved you with all my heart;
I have not loved my neighbours as myself.
Have mercy upon me,
cleanse me from my sins,
and help me to overcome my faults,**

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Receive God's forgiveness

May the Father forgive us
By the death of His Son
And strengthen us
To live in the power of the Spirit
All our days. **Amen.**

PRAISE

O Lord, open my lips...
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
Give me the joy of your saving help...
and sustain me with your life-giving Spirit.

THE COLLECT

Generous God, you give us gifts and make them grow:
though our faith is small as mustard seed, make it grow to your glory
and the flourishing of your kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Suggested hymn to sing or read ***Praise to the Lord, the almighty.***

THE WORD OF GOD.

Isaiah 44:6-8.

Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel
and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts:
I am the first and I am the last;
besides me there is no god.
Who is like me? Let them proclaim it,
let them declare and set it forth before me.
Who has announced from of old the things to come?
Let them tell us what is yet to be.
Do not fear, or be afraid;
have I not told you from of old and declared it?
You are my witnesses!
Is there any god besides me?
There is no other rock; I know not one.

Psalm 86:11-end.

Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; ♦
knit my heart to you, that I may fear your name.
I will thank you, O Lord my God, with all my heart, ♦
and glorify your name for evermore;
For great is your steadfast love towards me, ♦
for you have delivered my soul from the depths of the grave.
O God, the proud rise up against me
and a ruthless horde seek after my life; ♦
they have not set you before their eyes.
But you, Lord, are gracious and full of compassion, ♦
slow to anger and full of kindness and truth.
Turn to me and have mercy upon me; ♦
give your strength to your servant
and save the child of your handmaid.
Show me a token of your favour,
that those who hate me may see it and be ashamed; ♦
because you, O Lord, have helped and comforted me.

Romans 8:12-25.

So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits

of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Suggested hymn to sing or read **He will hold me fast.**

GOSPEL

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43:.

He put before them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, "Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?" He answered, "An enemy has done this." The slaves said to him, "Then do you want us to go and gather them?" But he replied, "No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn." '

Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, 'Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.' He answered, 'The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!

REFLECTION – 'Let both grow until the harvest.'

I mainly want to talk about the parable of the wheat and the weeds, but here are a couple of other points by way of introduction.

1. From today's reading from Isaiah 44:

The book of the prophet Isaiah falls into three sections, before, during and after the exile in Babylon in the 6th century BC, and chapter 44 is part of the middle section, sometimes known as '2nd Isaiah'. It was around this time that the Jewish people began to believe that there is only one God. Previously, although they had been sure that their God was the greatest, there was a general belief that each nation had its own god or gods, and the people in exile needed to be reassured that even though they were now in Babylon, over 500 miles from Jerusalem, their own God was still with them. So we read,

'I am the first and the last; apart from me there is no God.'

This becomes significant when we start thinking about parables of harvest, or in other words about a final judgement. Who is able to carry out this judgement? God alone!

2. As Malcolm Richardson wrote last week, this parable about the wheat and the weeds, and last Sunday's about the seed which fell in various unlikely places, are the only two which are followed by explanations, apparently given privately to the disciples. But surely when Jesus taught the crowds, he wanted them to understand, to learn about the Kingdom of God. Why bother otherwise? We are supposed to hear the parable, reflect upon it, see the message of the story and then apply it to our own understanding of God, or of how he wants us to live. It is now thought that these 'explanations' are in fact sermons given later by apostles or other church leaders, which have become attached to the original parable and included in the gospel with it. So in what follows, I am thinking about the parable itself, and not the explanation which follows.

So we have a story about a man who plants good seed in his field, but who notices as it grows that weeds are also growing among the wheat. Referred to in older versions of the bible as 'tares', these could well be darnel, which does grow in the middle east, and looks rather like wheat until the seed head forms. And darnel **was** gathered to use as fuel in the ovens. (The man concludes that 'An enemy has done this,' and the later

explanation refers to this enemy as 'the devil', but this is not crucial to the story, which is about the harvest.)

Although dandelion could, in fact, be weeded out with care, the point of this story is that both wheat and weeds are allowed to grow together **until the harvest**. Remember, this is a parable, not a lecture about farming methods.

When the time for the harvest arrives, **then** the sorting out of weeds and wheat can take place. The harvesters can tell the difference; the weeds are cleared away and burned; the wheat is gathered and brought into the barn. At the end of the age, the one in charge of the harvest of souls, God himself, will know who are those who belong to him, and those who do not. Who has a place in his 'barn' and who does not. And we know from our Isaiah reading that there is only one who has the right to declare the time of the harvest and make this judgement: 'Is there any other God besides me? No, there is not.'

It is a clear, perhaps you might even think a grim, message. When the time comes, make sure you are part of the harvest represented by the wheat, because everything else will be destroyed. Many other things, many other people, exist in the world, but only those declared righteous by God the Father, those who turn to Christ and are forgiven their sin, will be harvested by and for God. Grim – yes, perhaps, but also full of hope. Let's face it, much of Jesus' teaching presented people with a stark choice, for him or against him, with him or not with him, no grey areas. There was an urgency about his teaching, which with the passage of time has been largely lost. Yet if we look at the church in our time, with dwindling congregations and too much work for too few people, surely this shows the need for some urgency in mission today? For a streamlining of what we do so as to concentrate on what will actually bring the message home to people, to make sure that they at least have the opportunity to make that choice?

And finally, perhaps we also need a reminder to ourselves, not to be smug about our place among the wheat. It would be only too easy to look at someone else and think,

'Well, she's a weed and no mistake; I know where she is heading.' Remember, it is only at the end, at the time of harvest, that this becomes clear. This is the significance of leaving wheat and weeds growing together until then. We do not know what that person might do with the

rest of her life, what is really in her heart. In the parable, the weeds are left among the wheat until the very end.

That person might turn out to be wheat after all. And as I have said, there is only one who has the right to make that judgement: not you, not me, but the Lord of the harvest.

Jonathan Falkner.

Suggested hymn to sing or read **Purify my heart.**

THE CREED

**All I believe in God the Father,
 whose loving care is the pattern for family life.
 I believe in Jesus, the Son of God,
 who lives in my heart through faith,
 and fills me with his love.
 I believe in God the Holy Spirit,
 who strengthens me with power from on high.
 I believe in one God;
 Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

THE PRAYERS

A time of quiet prayer for

- *The universal Church - Bishops, synods and all leaders church*
- *The leaders of the nations*
- *The natural world and the resources of the earth*

**Lord Jesus, you are the Prince of Peace.
 Look upon our divided world
 to be with those who are victims of violence.
 We pray for the people of Ukraine, the Middle East
 and all who have been subjected to the cruelty of others.
 Help us to know the gift of your peace
 in the power of your Spirit and
 we ask you to soften the hearts
 of those who can stop the fighting.
 Creator God, we ask for your aid as your children of light
 living in the darkness of our world.
 Amen.**

Finishing with the South Calder Mission Community prayer...

**Heavenly Father we thank you for the life of your Church
in this place, and in all the villages of the South Calder
Mission Community;
for all who have served and worshipped you in years gone by,
for all who make up your family in our churches today,
for the faith we have in common, and for the people and
traditions which make each church unique.
By your Spirit, guide and equip us,
that together we might find new ways
to reach out to our local community,
to show your love to our neighbours,
and to encourage them
to follow the Lord Jesus in their lives.
Father, we offer ourselves to your service,
In the unity of the Holy Spirit,
And in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

and the Lord's prayer...

**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

Suggested hymn to sing or read **Lord of creation.**

The following prayer is said

**Be with me, Lord, as I finish my prayer today.
May my lips always speak the truth;
may my eyes which have read your word
see only what is good;
and may my life as well as my worship
be always pleasing in your sight,
for the glory of your name. Amen.**

And now may the Lord who brought us to birth by his Spirit,
strengthen us for the Christian life.
May the Lord who provides for all our needs
sustain us day by day.
May the Lord whose steadfast love is constant as a mother's care,
send us out to live and work for others.
And the blessing of God Almighty.
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be with us and remain with us always.
Amen.

So now may I go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

Links for the hymns

Praise to the Lord, the almighty.

https://youtu.be/_vegvb1u5s4

He will hold me fast.

<https://youtu.be/zFotEeq5gZk>

Purify my heart.

<https://youtu.be/mKfuZVWr-8I>

Lord of creation.

<https://youtu.be/DAVpsmqP85E>