



Heacham Parish Church



Sunday 13th June 2021 – Trinity 2

Opening music –

Alison plays an arrangement of a traditional French melody; used by John Bell (of the Iona Community) for one of his powerful hymns -

Jesus Christ is waiting v.1 , raging v.2 , healing v.3 , dancing v.4 , calling v.5. In Hymns Old & New (HON) 349.

As we gather in our homes, together yet apart, we meet in the presence of God.

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

O Lord, open our lips

All and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Give us the joy of your saving help

All and sustain us with your life-giving Spirit.

We have come together in the name of Christ to offer our praise and thanksgiving, to hear and receive God's holy word, to pray for the needs of the world, and to seek the forgiveness of our sins, that by the power of the Holy Spirit we may give ourselves to the service of God.

Prayers of confession

Jesus says, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.' So let us turn away from our sin and turn to Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

**Lord God,
we have sinned against you;
we have done evil in your sight.
We are sorry and repent.
Have mercy on us according to your love.
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our
sin.
Renew a right spirit within us
and restore us to the joy of your salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

May the Father of all mercies
cleanse *you* from *your* sins,
and restore *you* in his image
to the praise and glory of his name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Blessed is the Lord,
for he has heard the voice of our prayer;
therefore shall our hearts dance for joy
and in our song will we praise our God.

Song **Great is thy faithfulness**

sung and played by Lesley, Hilary, Terry, Karen, Colin, Rosie,
Sue, and Richard C

Great is Thy faithfulness
O God my Father,
there is no shadow of turning
with Thee;
Thou changest not,
Thy compassions they fail not,
as Thou hast been
Thou for ever wilt be.

*Great is Thy faithfulness,
great is Thy faithfulness;
morning by morning
new mercies I see;
all I have needed
Thy hand hath provided –
great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

Summer and winter,
and spring-time and harvest,
sun, moon and stars
in their courses above,
join with all nature in manifold witness
to Thy great faithfulness,
mercy and love.

Great is Thy faithfulness.....

Pardon for sin,
and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence
to cheer and to guide;
strength for today
and bright hope for tomorrow,
blessings all mine,
with ten thousand beside!

Great is Thy faithfulness....

Bible Reading: Mark 4: 26-34 read by Alison Hoyle

A Reflection Penny Sutton

Our reading today, from Mark chapter 4, has three parables each dealing with seed. The chapter begins with the Parable of the Sower, but we are focussing on the two later, short parables. These two simply say that God causes his Kingdom to grow and that it will not stop growing until it covers the whole world. This is illustrated by contrasting a tiny seed with a bountiful harvest. So, why this emphasis on seed? Last week our reading came from the previous chapter and Pip showed us some of the misunderstandings that had occurred there.

This week we find Jesus avoiding misunderstandings by placing His parables in a world His audience knew only too well. For most, this was a world of subsistence agriculture. If your crops failed you starved. Seed was an everyday commodity they knew all about. Many of us have become better acquainted with seed as we have turned our attention to our gardens during the pandemic. We realise the necessity of exercising patience while becoming more aware of the potential in a tiny seed.

There are many living in our 21st century world who will have difficulty with the word 'kingdom'. Most nations are republics or dictatorships. Although we live in the United Kingdom it is not a kingdom in the classic sense. In Jesus day, every nation was a monarchy or a dictatorship. A kingdom was the realm of a king who was the absolute ruler. The people of that kingdom were obligated to obey and serve their king. This audience knew exactly what a kingdom was. Thus, the Kingdom of God is the realm of God where he is absolute king. In His realm His commands are obeyed, and His will is done.

The citizens of that kingdom are the people of God, the Church. Where is that kingdom? It is in the believer and in the Church. The Church is not the Kingdom of God, but the Kingdom of God is in the Church even though the Church does not always obey the King's commands or do his will. Jesus used these two parables to describe in comprehensible terms the nature of the Kingdom of God. We too must ask "what is the Kingdom of God like?"

Is it like the seed that has the principle and power of life in it? Or is it like the growth of that seed? Or is it the harvest that results from that seed? Jesus is telling us that it is all three.

Some believe that it is up to us, the Church, to establish God's Kingdom on earth by our work and using our God given gifts. Not so. God will establish his Kingdom on earth. Every time we say the Lord's Prayer we pray 'Thy Kingdom come' but if we brought the Kingdom there would be no need to repeatedly ask God to send it! The first of our two parables underlines our helplessness in this respect. It depicts a farmer who sows seed but then might as well get a good night's sleep because he is powerless to make the seed grow. He just has to wait patiently, in faith, while the invisible miracle occurs. The seed has an inherent power of life as does the Word of God which causes the Kingdom to grow.

In short God does it all. He uses His people, the Church, to

1. Sow the seed of the word.
2. Wait for maturity.
3. Reap the harvest.

Meanwhile God alone can

1. Provide the seed.
2. Cause that seed to grow.
3. Give rise to a harvest.

The Kingdom of God does not come overnight. The seed of the Word is sown and we must wait patiently for God to bring results in His time. Just as 'great oaks from little acorns grow' we often cannot conceive how large a result can come from small beginnings.

Augustine wrote: -

Without God we cannot. Without us God will not.

The Apostles Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.**

Amen.

Song: The Kingdom of God

sung and played by Judith, Richard G, Lynda, Hilary, and Lesley

The kingdom of God
is justice and joy,
for Jesus restores
what sin would destroy;
God's power and glory
in Jesus we know,
and here and hereafter
the kingdom shall grow.

The kingdom of God
is mercy and grace,
the captives are freed
the sinners find place,
the outcast are welcomed
God's banquet to share,
and hope is awakened
in place of despair.

The kingdom of God
is challenge and choice,
believe the good news,
repent and rejoice!
His love for us sinners
brought Christ to His cross,
our crisis of judgement
for gain or for loss.

God's kingdom is come,
the gift and the goal,
in Jesus begun,
in heaven made whole;
the heirs of the kingdom
shall answer His call,
and all things cry, 'Glory!'
to God all-in-all!

Prayers of Intercession, led by Penny Taylor

Heavenly Father, we look outward to your world, to those countries we will never go to but which we do hear about in our newsfeeds. We continue to pray for the peace of Jerusalem and for a sustainable peace in Israel and Palestine. We pray for the Central African Republic, Eritrea, and other countries that are still suffering wars. We pray especially for non-governmental organisations as they struggle to work in difficult circumstances and help us to support those charities who work in your Name to support the most vulnerable. We pray for the innocent men, women and children who are caught up in recent conflicts, and those who are suffering after years of warfare. We pray too for the UK and other rich nations to provide enough International Aid not only to provide vaccines to make us in the West safe but for the money which is needed to keep people alive. Remind us Lord and disturb us in our comfortableness.

Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

Creator God, we pray for the Climate Crisis which is only now being recognised throughout the world. We pray for Scientists, governments, and we ourselves, the general public, that we will acknowledge the harm we have caused to our world and work towards solutions. We pray particularly for the COP 26 Climate Change Conference in November and the G7 Summit here in Cornwall happening as we pray. We ask for your intervention in your world and for wisdom and understanding for those who are in positions to change policies worldwide. We pray for the United Nations Decade of Ecosystem restoration. Thank you Father that you are raising up projects which can save our beautiful World.

Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father we turn to pray for your Church - your people here on earth. Guide all our church leaders worldwide. We pray for all who lead churches that they will take time to listen to your promptings and that we will become a different church as we reopen more and more.

Veronica talked about a humbler, simpler, and bolder church. Help us Lord to do this not in our own strength but in yours. Renew us all again with your life-giving Holy Spirit.

Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

Healing God we pray for those many people we know who are ill in mind, body, or spirit. Those who have long term health conditions, those who are coming to the end of their lives, and those who are suffering any kind of illness. Lord we pray for your healing peace to spirits who are weary, fresh hope for those who are losing hope, and courage to withstand their pain where it is most severe. Remembering too our hardworking doctors, nurses, and health professionals, give them strength and resilience at this time. We pray too for your peace for those who need it most at this time.

Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

Finally, we take time to bring our own lives before you.... In a time of silence let us still ourselves and listen to our Father who we may only hear in the quietest of whispers...

(Take time to be still and quiet)

Merciful Father. Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Concluding with the Lord's Prayer led by Simon Wilson

To a troubled world
Peace from Christ
To a searching world
Love from Christ
To a waiting world
Love from Christ

The Lord bless you and watch over you,
the Lord make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you,
the Lord look kindly on you
and give you peace;
and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the
Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you and those you
love now and always. **Amen.**

Closing music

*Alison plays a light, joyful Minuet by J S Bach; from a suite of
short keyboard pieces that he wrote for his second wife, Anna
Magdalena.*

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