Dorset South and West Circuit

**Service for 19th July 2020 by Pam Woodland**

### Opening words Psalm 139 v 1 – 6 “The Message Bible”

God, investigate my life; get all the facts firsthand. I’m an open book to you; even from a distance, you know what I’m thinking. You know when I leave and when I get back; I’m never out of your sight. You know everything I’m going to say before I start the first sentence. I look behind me and you’re there, then up ahead and you’re there, too – your reassuring presence, coming and going. This is too much, too wonderful – I can’t take it all in!

**Hymn: It is a thing most wonderful**

1.It is a thing most wonderful, 2.And yet, I know that it is true;

Almost too wonderful to be, He chose a poor and humble lot

That God’s own Son should come from heaven, And wept and toiled and mourned and died

And die to save a child like me. For love of those who loved him not.

3.It is most wonderful to know 4.And yet I want to love thee, Lord,

His love for me so free and sure; O light the flame within my heart,

But ‘tis more wonderful to see And I will love thee more and more.

My love for him so faint and poor. Until I see thee as thou art.

**Prayers**

We praise you, Loving God, for Jesus. For the way he loves us with a love which is more wonderful than any human love, given freely so that we might know you as our friend.

We praise you, Loving God, for our love. For the way we have been shown how to love by our parents, our neighbours, by our Christian brothers and sisters. For the way we have been taught how to love by Jesus, the friend of all. For the impulse to love planted in us by your Spirit.

We praise you, Loving God, for friends. For the people who love us with a love that is overflowing, unending, given without seeking anything in return.

We praise you, Loving God, for friendship makes us the people we are. Amen

### Prayers of Confession from a poem by Kathleen Partridge

Forgive me for the angry words I didn’t mean to say,

Forgive me for the fit of sulks that spoiled a happy day.

Forgive me for the muddle that I left upon the floor,

The tea I wouldn’t eat, the hasty way I slammed the door.

Forgive me for my selfishness and all my little sins,

And help me to be better when another day begins. *(Take time for your own thoughts)*

To those who confess their sins and are determined to live a new life, Jesus says “Your sins are forgiven.” Amen

**The Lord’s Prayer**

**Reading: Matthew 13 v 24 – 30 -The parable of the Weeds**

Jesus told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed ears, then the weeds also appeared.

“The owner’s servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’ ‘An enemy did this,’ he replied. The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’ ‘No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned, then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.’”

**Matthew 13 v 36 – 43 – The Parable of the Weeds Explained**

Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.”

He answered, “The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.”

**Reflection**

Today’s reading reminded me of the words of the harvest hymn “All the world is God’s own field … Wheat and tares together sown, unto joy or sorrow grown.”

This parable comes after the parable of the sower sowing seed (Matthew 13 v 3 – 9) and has some similarities to make the listeners think; scenes they would come across in their daily lives but Jesus’ interpretation was not necessarily what they were expecting.

It appears that the landowner himself sowed the field of seed but it was his servants who noticed the weeds growing amongst the corn. It was a common weed in the area – darnel - but the landowner knew immediately that it had been sown by his enemy. His reply to the servants was unexpected – they thought he would want them to pull up the weeds before they could take a stranglehold on the wheat – but he told them to leave the wheat and tares to grow together.

When explaining the parable to the disciples Jesus put himself in the role of the landowner – the Son of Man – sowing good seed to form a distinct community who would live lives shaped by God’s grace and be committed to doing the will of God. But, even today, this community has to live with those identified as children of the evil one, who will try to influence the spirit of the good community. God’s saving presence will mean that the good wheat will prosper and not be overcome by the weeds, which will eventually be gathered together and burned. The good wheat will be gathered and “shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”

Before I sat down to write these words I spent an hour in the garden weeding! And while I was wrestling with the bindweed and cinquefoil, the chickweed and groundsel, and all the other plants that were not where I wanted them and were therefore weeds, I thought of the different types of weeds. The bindweed has a small pink/white trumpet like flower and is very pretty, but not when it grows among my shrubs; and the cinquefoil has tiny red leaves and bright yellow flowers and adds colour to the garden, but not when its sharing a tub with my rose bush! The roots of these often spread and go quite deep and even when you think you have managed to get them out, they pop-up somewhere nearby at a later stage. Whereas the chickweed and groundsel have a direct root and can be pulled up without leaving any behind – but they seed from the top and if left they will throw out seeds ready to grow in places you didn’t expect. And, by the way, I found a tomato growing in amongst the petunias – plant or weed?

Our lives could feel a bit like the wheat and tares. Sometimes we feel everything is fine but beneath the surface there is spreading resentment and feelings of dislike, or we may have a short-term grudge which is easily resolved and we can carry on as normal until the next time the seeds germinate and something upsets us. But we grow strong in the love of God, and by giving friendship, help, encouragement and love to others we can show them God’s love for everyone.

We think of ourselves as the wheat in the parable and trust that the roots of the weeds sown by the enemy will not undermine us so that we take the easy path and give in to temptation, following the ways of the evil one. We are reminded in Psalm 139 that God is always with us and knows our every move. He will not let us become engulfed in evil if we put our trust in Him and pass on His love to others through the way we live our lives.

**Lord of harvest, grant that we, wholesome grain and pure may be.**

### Meditation (Hymns & Psalms 428)

There is no moment of my life, No place where I may go,

No action which God does not see, No thought he does not know.

Before I speak, my words are known, And all that I decide,

To come or go: God knows my choice, And makes himself my guide.

If I should close my eyes to him, He comes to give me sight;

If I should go where all is dark, He makes my darkness light.

He knew my days before all days, Before I am to be;

He keeps me, loves me, in my ways – No lover such as he.

**Prayers of Intercession**

We bring to you the troubles of the world;

*Pray for places of conflict, war, intolerance.*

Lord Jesus, where there is hatred, bring your love.

We bring to you broken relationships and mistrust;

*Pray for governments, unions, the rich and poor.*

Lord Jesus, where there is injury, bring your pardon.

We bring to you the Church, here and throughout the world:

*Pray for ministry, those who seek, guide, serve and pray*

Lord Jesus, where there is doubt, bring true faith.

We bring to you all human sorrow:

*Pray for the bereaved, lonely, anxious especially during the present pandemic*

Lord Jesus, where there is sadness, bring your joy.

We bring to you ourselves, our trials and temptations:

*We bring our own prayers to you Lord Jesus*

May we be channels of your peace and love. Lord Jesus, bless us in your service. Amen

As we said in our prayers earlier **-** *We praise you, Loving God, for friendship makes us the*

*people we are.* And I think everyone who knows me, knows that this is my favourite hymn.

**Hymn What a friend we have in Jesus**

1.What a friend we have in Jesus, 2.Have we trials and temptations,

All our sins and griefs to bear! Is there trouble anywhere?

What a privilege to carry We should not be discouraged;

Everything to God in prayer! Take it to the Lord in prayer.

O what peace we often forfeit Can we find a friend so faithful

O what needless pain we bear, Who will all our sorrows share?

All because we do not carry Jesus knows our every weakness;

Everything to God in prayer! Take it to the Lord in prayer.

3.Are we weak and heavy laden,

Cumbered with a load of care?

Precious Saviour, still our refuge –

Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?

Take it to the Lord in prayer;

In his arms he’ll take and shield thee,

Thou wilt find a solace there.

**Blessing**

From today and always

May we look upon each person we meet with the eyes of Christ

Speak to each person we meet with the words of Christ

And go wherever we are led with the peace of Christ.

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be amongst you and remain with you always. Amen