



The Sunday Supplement

Issue 18: 18th July 2020

Call to Worship

We've come to worship God,
who loved us before we were yet
born,
who knows us even better than we
know ourselves,
whose presence never leaves us,
and whose love for us never ceases.
This is our God.
Let's worship together!

Prayer

God of small seeds and mighty plants, you take our meagre lives
and with your love cause them to produce acts of loving kindness for you in this
world.

You hear our cries and find us when we are lost and wandering in fear.
You bring us home with you so that we may be made whole, rejoicing in your
goodness.

Help us to joyfully serve you all our days, knowing that you are always watching
over us.

Prepare our hearts to receive your word and our spirits to respond in eagerness
to serve you.

In Jesus' name, we pray. **Amen.**

Nancy C. Townley <http://www.ministrymatters.com/>



Reading

Matthew 13: 24-30 & 36-43



A Prayer of Confession

Merciful God,
you plant each of us like seeds in the
same field and together we are
nourished and nurtured by the sun.
We sway in the wind and are refreshed
by the rain.
We are blessed by the knowledge that
you want us to grow towards what you
call us to be.

When we deprive others of that same
opportunity,
forgive us.

When we want to uproot those whom
we believe
do not belong in our part of the field,
forgive us.

When we label others as good or bad
rather than accept them for who they
are,
forgive us.

When we are reluctant to acknowledge
that we ourselves are a mixture of weeds
and wheat,
forgive us.

When we are afraid to look into the fields
of our own lives
to see what is growing there,
forgive us.

O God, you know us inside and out,
through and through.
**You search us out and lay your hand
upon us.**

You know what we are going to say even
before we speak.
**So we pray that you will help us to reach
out to the uprooted and rejected,
the lonely and the outcast,
and to develop and grow the good in
ourselves, in others and in the world.
This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen**

Moira Laidlaw Liturgies Online
<http://www.liturgiesonline.com.au/>

Thought for the week



Harvest time is beginning in Britain. Fields that were green are now golden. Combine harvesters are arriving at farms to bring in the cereal crop. Once hidden among the fields of grain, weeds are now easy to detect. They stand taller than the stalks of wheat and barley. As the crop is cut and processed these interlopers will be sifted out and discarded. Only good seed yields grain that is good to eat. The rest is discarded.

Jesus often used stories based on the natural world to explain the things of God. As he travelled around the country-side we can imagine him speaking to the crowds close to fields of wheat. Early on the weeds that will later be so obvious are hidden among the good seed that will produce food. As the shoots begin to grow it becomes clear some are not as they should be. What to do? To root out the bad shoots will damage the crop. Better wait until harvest and dispose of them then.

Matthew's gospel is alone in recording the parable of the weeds. The meaning of the story is clear. Good and evil co-exist in this world. This is a simple fact of life. At the end of all things the good will prevail. The weeds will be cast away. No intervention is required by the workers for now. Good seed will produce a healthy crop. Weeds will simply be tossed onto the fire following the harvest.

The grain harvest in Britain this year takes place as the country moves gradually towards a new future. Churches are beginning to open again after four months worshipping 'together alone'. The weeks of restrictions on public worship has seen seeds sown. New things have been attempted. Old habits have been challenged. Something different is happening.

Only time will tell which of the seeds sown will produce a good harvest and which will turn out to be weeds. The story of the wheat and the weeds may guide us in the coming days, reminding us that rooting out the weeds we know are there may not be the best course of action right now. Only when the crop is ripe to harvest will it become clear which seeds were good, and which produced worthless weeds. But the fate of both the wheat produced by the good seed and the weeds produced by the bad is not ours to decide.

Matthew's account of the parable of the weeds ends with a reminder that the final weeding out is in the hands of Jesus. The harvesters are angels, not the workers mentioned at the beginning of the parable. The task of the workers is to nurture the crop rather than to busy themselves rooting out weeds. Our task in the coming days is to tend and encourage growth. Decisions on the quality of the crop are for God to take. Wise servants will watch, wait and water until harvest time comes around.

How sweet the Name of Jesus sounds *(John Newton)*

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear!
It charms our sorrows, heals our wounds,
And drives away our fear.

It makes the coward spirit brave
And calms the troubled breast;
'Tis manna to the hungry soul,
And to the weary, rest.

Dear Name! the Rock on which we build,
Our Shield and hiding place,
Our never-failing Treas'ry filled
With boundless stores of grace!

Jesus! our brother, shepherd, friend,
Our prophet, priest, and King;
Our Lord, our life, our way, our End,
Accept the praise we bring.

Weak is the effort of our heart,
And cold our warmest thought;
But when we see Thee as Thou art,
We'll praise Thee as we ought.

Till then we would Thy love proclaim
With every fleeting breath,
And may the music of Thy name
Refresh our souls in death.

Margaret Norris chose "How sweet the Name of Jesus sounds" for this week's Sunday Supplement.

It was very difficult to choose this hymn, I love so many. Then I remembered a couple of weeks ago an old hymn had popped into my mind. "How sweet the Name of Jesus sounds to a believers ear".

I tried to remember all the verses. Then only two days later Geoff's brother Hugh said (on a phone call) out of the blue "I've just discovered a lovely old hymn - 'How sweet the Name of Jesus sounds...'"

So I've sung that hymn every day since, but I've turned it from the first person singular to first person plural - from 'me' to 'us' - because lockdown has highlighted how precious it is to worship God together.

Blessing

As you go from here into the week ahead,
with whatever joys and challenges it holds,
do not be discouraged or disheartened.

Remember the glory that awaits you as a child of God.

Hold on to that truth;

live in that hope.

And may the peace of God,
the blessing of Jesus Christ,
and the presence of the Holy Spirit
be with you and among you.

Amen