

Sunday October 4th 2020 WORSHIP AT HOME: GOSPEL Matthew 21.33-46

Welcome to our act of Worship

Introit

Spirit of the living God, T Same

Fall afresh on me.
Spirit of the living God,
Fall afresh on me.
Break me, melt me,
Mould me, fill me,
Spirit of the living God,
Fall afresh on me.

Call to worship Psalm 117

Praise the Lord, all you nations!
Extol him, all you peoples!
For great is his steadfast love towards us,
and the faithfulness of the Lord endures for ever.
Praise the Lord!

A Prayer of Approach

Creator God,
you do not distance yourself from us;
rather you choose to be intimately involved with
every detail of human living.
Help us to sense your presence in our worship
and to know your presence in our lives;
that we might better serve you in this age and
time.
For the sake of Christ, **Amen.**

HYMN

T Laudate Dominum

Ye servants of God, your Master proclaim,
and publish abroad his wonderful name;
the name all-victorious of Jesus extol,
his kingdom is glorious and rules over all.

God ruleth on high, almighty to save,
and still he is nigh, his presence we have;
the great congregation his triumph shall sing,
ascribing salvation to Jesus, our King.

“Salvation to God, who sits on the throne!”
Let all cry aloud and honour the Son;
the praises of Jesus the angels proclaim,
fall down on their faces and worship the Lamb.

Then let us adore and give him his right,
all glory and power, all wisdom and might;
all honour and blessing with angels above,
and thanks never ceasing and infinite love.

HP 278, MP784, RS293, STF340

*(Some of the hymn books widely used in the
Wiltshire United Area)*

Prayer of Praise

God of all power and might, ruler of the universe,
you are worthy of all praise.
You created the galaxies, planets and this earth.
You made us for yourself and our hearts are
restless till they find their rest in you.
You have given us wills with which to obey you and
voices to sing your praise.
May we find the purpose of our lives in doing your
will and in giving voice to the praise which all
creation shows.
We ask it through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Prayer of Confession

God, lover and carer of us all,
often we are like the vineyard
that fails to produce good fruit.
We acknowledge that,
despite the love and care you show us,
we have failed to extend
that same love and care to others.
We are truly sorry
that at times our lives have been
more akin to wild grapes than a vintage wine.
(pause)
Do not give up on us,
do not lay us to waste,
but prune away that which is dead;
clear away the stones that prevent our growth;
and rain upon us your living water,
that we may produce fruit
worthy of you. **Amen.**

HYMN

For the fruits of his creation T East Acklam

thanks be to God;
for his gifts to every nation,
thanks be to God;
for the ploughing, sowing, reaping,
silent growth while we are sleeping,
future needs in earth's safe-keeping,
thanks be to God.

In the just reward of labour,
God's will is done;
in the help we give our neighbour,
God's will is done;
in our world-wide task of caring
for the hungry and despairing,
in the harvests we are sharing,
God's will is done.

For the harvests of his Spirit,
thanks be to God;
for the good we all inherit,
thanks be to God;
for the wonders that astound us,
for the truths that still confound us,
most of all that love has found us,
thanks be to God.

HP342, MP153, RS42 , STF124

Ministry of the Word of God

RCL Proper 22 Year A

Isaiah 5.1-7; Psalm 80.7-15; Philippians 3.4b-14;

Matthew 21.33-46

The Parable of the Wicked Tenants

33 'Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watch-tower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. ³⁴When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. ³⁵But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. ³⁶Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. ³⁷Finally he sent his son to them, saying, "They will respect my son." ³⁸But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance." ³⁹So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. ⁴⁰Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?' ⁴¹They said to him, 'He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.'

42 Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the scriptures:

**"The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
this was the Lord's doing,
and it is amazing in our eyes"?**

⁴³Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. ⁴⁴The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.'

45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. ⁴⁶They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

This is the Gospel of Christ.
Praise to Christ our Lord.

Reflection

Early last Saturday week I was at Heathrow Airport awaiting the arrival of The Rev Dr Peggy Kabonde, who will be serving as a minister with us in the Wiltshire United Area. Suddenly into the arrival's hall came two policemen, one holding hand luggage the other a wheeled suitcase, behind came a young man in his early 20's handcuffed accompanied by further police. It took me to Croydon and the murder of Sergeant Matt Ratana and we hold in our prayers his loved ones and all those affected by this senseless and appalling killing.

The plight of humanity to commit violence seems virtually as old as humanity's first breath – the Bible runs with incidents: Cain and Abel in Genesis. Think David and Saul, do you know part of the reason for Saul's fear of David – because the local women ascribed in song that David had slaughtered more in battle than Saul! (1 Samuel 17v7-8) Within the New Testament recall the passage we by-pass at Christmas – the Slaughter of the Innocents (Matthew 2:16–18). Think of that most famous parable – the Good Samaritan "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead.. (Luke 10v30)

Today's Gospel parable leaves me with these questions:

What is the root cause of violence in this parable?

What do the tenants see that the landlord does not see himself?

Why is there so much hatred?

What I find most shocking is this line after the parable, **⁴¹They said to him, 'He will put those wretches to a miserable death...'** The "they" are the chief priests and elders, not simply people of faith but high-ranking religious officials advocating extreme violence! Of course, whether the answer is given in a gloating voice or as a lament in fear and trembling depends on where those listening see themselves. We who are Christians, have tended to read the parable seeing God as the landowner but the chief priests and elders probably see themselves in the role of the landowner, caught in his own merciful response to those in his charge.

"Blessed are the peacemakers" seems light-years from the mindset of **⁴¹They said to him, 'He will put those wretches to a miserable death...'**

Thinking of the extreme reactions of the tenants to those the owner sent, why is it that our reflexes are often trained to reject, rather than to embrace? Why are our reflexes often to criticise rather than encourage, to justify rather than to repent, to judge rather than to accept?

Nearly 30 years ago I was involved in chaplaincy at Horfield prison in Bristol, which was then a Category A jail. I was in my mid-twenties and what shocked me was how many of the inmates were younger than me! Thinking of the murder of Sergeant Matt Ratana, the accused is 23!

When will humanity learn peace, love, respect, honesty? When will we simply not think rights but responsibilities? When will we beat our swords into ploughshares?

Said Jesus **33 'Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watch-tower...'** "Gethsemane" means winepress!

Lord have mercy!

Prayer of Response

Spend a few moments in quiet reflection, praying for peace, which is not simply the absence of violence, but peace in the heart, mind, and soul.

Lord have mercy

Christ have mercy

Lord have mercy. Amen.

HYMN

Make me a channel of your peace T Same

Where there is hatred, let me bring love
Where there is injury, Your pardon Lord
And where there's doubt, true faith in You

*Make me a channel of your peace
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope
Where there is darkness, only light
And where there's sadness ever joy*

Oh, Master grant that I may never seek
So much to be consoled as to console
To be understood as to understand
Or to be loved as to love with all my soul

Make me a channel of your peace
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned
It is in giving unto all that we receive
And in dying that we are born to eternal life

Our Prayers

God, planter, carer and nourisher of the vineyard:
we are the vines,
lovingly cared for to produce fruit:
the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience;
kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness
and self-control,
fruit that is lacking in so many parts of your world.
We pray for families the world over where love is
in short supply.

Silence.

God of the vineyard,

help us to cultivate that fruit.

We pray for those people whose lives are devoid
of joy.

Silence.

God of the vineyard,

help us to cultivate that fruit.

We pray for countries and communities of the
world where peace is a pipe dream.

Silence.

God of the vineyard,

help us to cultivate that fruit.

We pray for relationships where there is an
absence of patience.

Silence.

God of the vineyard,

help us to cultivate that fruit.

We pray for all those who make the world a better
place through acts of kindness and loving self-
sacrifice.

Silence.

God of the vineyard,

help us to cultivate that fruit.

We give thanks for the generosity of all who give
their lives for your kingdom.

Silence.

God of the vineyard,

help us to cultivate that fruit.

We pray that you will increase our faithfulness,
gentleness and self-control.

Silence.

God of the vineyard,

help us to cultivate that fruit.

God of the vineyard,
hear our prayer for we ask it in the name of Christ.
Amen.

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.**

HYMN

And can it be that I should gain *T Sagina*

An interest in the Saviour's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain?
For me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! how can it be
That Thou, my God, should die for me?

'Tis mystery all! The Immortal dies!
Who can explore His strange design?
In vain the firstborn seraph tries
To sound the depths of love divine!
'Tis mercy all! let earth adore,
Let angel minds inquire no more.

He left His Father's throne above,
So free, so infinite His grace;
Emptied Himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam's helpless race;
'Tis mercy all, immense and free;
For, O my God, it found out me.

Long my imprisoned spirit lay
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free;
I rose, went forth and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in Him is mine!
Alive in Him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach the eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.

HP216 , MP33, RS366, STF345

Blessing

May God who plants vineyards
call you to work for justice and righteousness.
May God who breaks down walls

release you to work for justice and righteousness.
May God who offers new life
sustain you as you work for justice and
righteousness.
And may you be blessed in the knowledge that you
are a child of God. **Amen.**

Rev David Coppard Superintendent @ Wiltshire
United Area
Bank Chaplain @ Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton

***Our churches may not all be open, but the Church is
active and alive.***

*This is service is offered to any and all, with love
and prayers.*

The Gospel for Little People

Look after my land

Jesus said, 'A man had to go away on a long
journey.

Point.

He asked some people to look after his farm

Mime digging.

and pick all the food.

Mime picking.

But when he sent someone to ask for the
food,

Hold out hands.

they would not share it.

Shake head.

So the man sent his son to ask for his food.

Hold out hands.

But they would not share it with him either.

Hold hands close to chest.

The man was angry.

Shake fist.

He gave his farm to other people to look
after.'

*Push away with one hand, then turn and
beckon with the other.*

A personal prayer for the week

Thou true life-giving vine,
let me thy sweetness prove;
renew my life with thine,
refresh my soul with love. **Amen**

CCL LICENCE

Steeple Ashton Methodist CCL 291605

Warminster United CCL 1221052

Westbury Methodist CCL 781988

Westbury URC CCL 293641