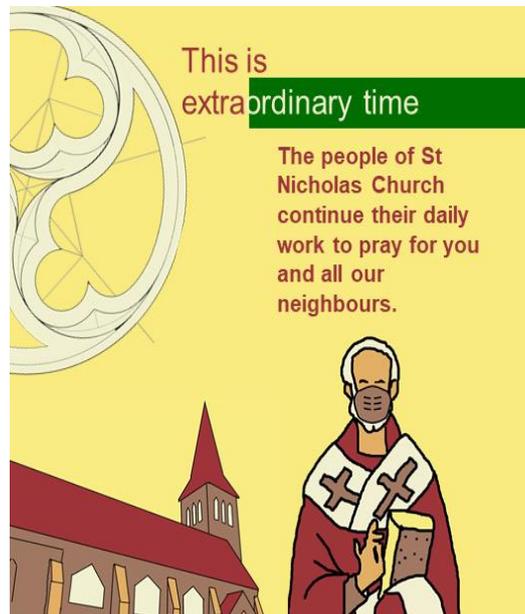


**Worship at St. Nicholas, Sutton
for Trinity 5 on 12 July 2020
Collect, hymns, readings & sermon**



Please join me for our service at 10.30am today (or at another convenient time) by following the Order of Service and singing in your own home.

I will be thinking of you all and praying for you at The Rectory at the same time and longing for our future reunion in Church.

Frances

Revd Frances Arnold, Priest-in-Charge

Duty Warden: Geoff Rendall

Server: Lily Shambare

Musician: Pam Affleck

Sound desk: Jennifer Emptage

Old & New Testament: Jean Chappell

Gospel: Alistair Cruickshank

Sidespersons: Alistair Cruickshank, Richard West

Refreshments: Gill Ayres, Doreen Kennett

Welcomers: Sylvia Cowling, Kaushalya Jeyaraj

Collect (prayer of the week)

Almighty and everlasting God,
by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church
is governed and sanctified:
hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people,
that in their vocation and ministry
they may serve you in holiness and truth
to the glory of your name;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Hymns

Opening *All people that on earth do dwell*

Gradual *Lord thy word abideth*

Readings

Isaiah 55.10-13 *An Invitation to Abundant Life*

¹⁰ For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,
and do not return there until they have watered the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
¹¹ so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

¹² For you shall go out in joy,
and be led back in peace;
the mountains and the hills before you
shall burst into song,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

¹³ Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;
instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle;
and it shall be to the LORD for a memorial,
for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Romans 8.1-11 *Life in the Spirit*

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. ³For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ⁵For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the

Spirit. ⁶To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, ⁸and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹ But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

Matthew 13.1-9, 18-23

The Parable of the Sower

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake. ²Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. ³And he told them many things in parables, saying: 'Listen! A sower went out to sow. ⁴And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. ⁵Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. ⁶But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. ⁷Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. ⁸Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹Let anyone with ears listen!'

¹⁸ 'Hear then the parable of the sower. ¹⁹When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. ²⁰As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. ²²As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. ²³But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.'

Sermon

*A sower went out to sow...seeds...
they sprang up and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold (Matthew 13.3-8)*

People in the crowd listening to Jesus would have been familiar with the sight of a sower striding over unploughed stubble, sowing the seed as he went. This was the normal method then; sowing preceded ploughing. And the idea that teaching is a seed that takes root in people's hearts had been used by teachers before Jesus. But the seed in Jesus' parable is not just moral teaching: it is the good seed of the coming of the Kingdom and a warning to us to take care that the message conveyed by our ministry of word and sacrament, our pastoral care and social action, really is good seed, the genuine word of God and not anything else.

Jesus wants to make a crucial point about the nature of God's kingdom and how it would come about. He does this by presenting two sharply contrasting images: the small, randomly scattered seeds and the miracle of the field of waving corn. He intends us to hold both these images in our mind's eye simultaneously: the haphazardly sown seed and the hundredfold yield of corn at harvest time.

This is a short story with a pithy punchline. It's not really interested in *how* the change has come about. It's about the fact that at one point in time someone can just be scattering handfuls of seed and at another the field will be full of waving corn with a yield that surpasses all prayer and understanding. That's what would have caught Jesus' audience's attention.

The coming of the Kingdom was initially bringing about a tough situation which couldn't be avoided: some of the seed would be trampled on, some would wither for lack of moisture and some would be choked by thorns. Jesus himself has already faced setbacks as he brings the good news of the Kingdom to the cities and villages of Galilee. His announcement in the synagogue in Nazareth of the pattern which his ministry is to follow ended with the threat of mob violence.

In discouraging times Jesus' followers need to hold in their minds the image of the harvest, which his Palestinian audience would have recognised as a symbol of the breaking in of the Kingdom of God. The preaching of the gospel could be trusted to bring in a rich harvest. Not all will wish to learn this truth, however, and Jesus recognises that.

The parable may serve as a warning about the quality of our lives and the life of the parish. There may be obstacles there which obstruct the growth of the seed, but Jesus stresses that, despite the obstacles, the message will be heard, at least by some and produce a harvest. It is good to hold that assurance before us as we pray, with Christians throughout the world, 'Thy kingdom come.' **Amen**