



AT HOME SERVICE

Sunday 12th July 2026

compiled by Dean James - Worship Leader

Call to worship: Romans 8 1-4

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

John 4:23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.

Prayer

Gracious God, once again you have called us worship. We open our hearts and lives before you. Living God, we pause and give thanks for Your goodness and grace. We are blessed by Your Love – a challenging love; a rebuking love; a healing love; an accepting love; a forgiving love. May we rest in You, knowing your love for us is deep and secure, in and through the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen

Hymn

1] At the name of Jesus
Ev'ry knee shall bow,
Ev'ry tongue confess him
King of glory now;
'Tis the Father's pleasure
We should call him Lord,
Who from the beginning
Was the mighty Word.

2] Humbled for a season
To receive a name
From the lips of sinners,
Amongst whom he came.
Faithfully he bore it,
Spotless to the last,
Brought it back victorious
When from death he passed.

3] In your hearts enthrone him!
There let him subdue
All that is not holy,
All that is not true.
Crown him as your Captain,
In temptation's hour;
Let his will enfold you
In its light and pow'r.

4] Brothers, this Lord Jesus
Shall return again
With his Father's glory,
With his angel train,
For all wreaths of empire
Meet upon his brow,
And our hearts confess him
King of glory now.

Caroline Maria Noel (1817 - 1877)

Proverbs 2:2-6

My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, then you will understand

the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, grant us the wisdom to seek Your truth through Scripture. Illuminate our hearts and minds as we read Your Word, guiding us to understand and apply its teachings in our lives.

May Your Holy Spirit inspire us to grow in knowledge and discernment, leading us closer to You each day. Amen.

Reading: Matthew 13:1-9, 16-23

The Parable of the Sower

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop - a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. Whoever has ears, let them hear."

But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

"Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

The Lord's Prayer: sung version

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, hallowed be thy name,

On earth, as it is in heaven. Hallowed be thy name,

Give us this day our daily bread. Hallowed be thy name,

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive others, hallowed be thy name,

Lead us not into temptation, hallowed be thy name,

But deliver us from all that is evil. Hallowed be thy name,

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, hallowed be thy name,

Forever and ever, and ever and ever, hallowed be thy name,

Amen! Amen! Amen! Amen! Hallowed be thy name.

Reflection

Matthew sets the scene for us here. The lake is the Sea of Galilee. The crowds gather around him and he is forced to use a boat to create some space between him and the crowd. Picture Jesus sitting in the boat, a little way out from shore and all the people gathered along the shore at the water's edge to hear him. The people may have been sitting up along the banks listening to Jesus as he taught.

Jesus tells them one of the best-known parables in the bible. It is recorded in three of the four gospels. Jesus tells a simple story about a farmer sowing his seed. The seed falls on four different types of soil with four results. Then Jesus closes with a plea to the crowd to hear, *"He who has ears, let him hear."* Jesus later goes on to explain the parable when asked to do so by the disciples. He also has a blessing for the disciples because their hearts are open to God's word.

"But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it." Many others before them longed to see and hear the things that were seeing and hearing now. The disciples are blessed because unlike many in the crowds, their hearts are open to God and his word as they see Jesus' miracles and hear his teaching. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus calls the seed in the parable, "the message about the kingdom." The Gospels of Mark and Luke simply call it, "the word of God." And so, sowing the seed represents sharing God's word with others, especially the message about the kingdom – the gospel, the good news that God sent his Son Jesus into the world to be our Saviour. The sower is anyone who shares God's word with others.

Jesus goes on to warn about three obstacles, three hindrances that keep people from receiving the word of God as it is sown and stops it being fruitful. The first is the evil one. "When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path." Prayer is so important in all that we do. Praying that God will protect His word that is sown in peoples' heart that at some point it may germinate when the time is right.

The second hindrance to fruitfulness is shallow roots of faith. "The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away." How do we form deep roots that count the cost of following Jesus? We need to know and understand repentance of sin and the cost of discipleship and stay close to Jesus. The Christian confession is not, "I believe in the church," but "Jesus is Lord." We are the people of Jesus, not the people of a church or religious club. As we truly hear the words of Jesus in whatever way it comes to us, we form strong roots.

The third hindrance to people receiving the Gospel, or not being as fruitful as God intended, is worldly distractions. "The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful." If we are truthful with ourselves, we have probably all found ourselves as these seeds. How do we resist worldly distractions that limit our fruitfulness? Meditating on these verses from Proverbs 3: 5-6 might help. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight".

And then finally Jesus comes to the seed that produces a crop. "But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown." The seed that grows and is fruitful is no different from the seed that lands on the path, or on the rocky ground, or among thorns. It's all the same seed; it's all the same message. But we need to receive it with an open heart and a willing mind to be fruitful for God.

Hymn

1] O for a heart to praise my God,
a heart from sin set free,
a heart that always feels Thy blood
so freely shed for me.

2] A heart resigned, submissive, meek,
my great Redeemer's throne,
where only Christ is heard to speak,
where Jesus reigns alone.

3] A humble, lowly, contrite heart,
believing, true, and clean,
which neither life nor death can part
from Christ who dwells within.

4] A heart in ev'ry thought renewed
and full of love divine,
perfect and right and pure and good,
a copy, Lord, of Thine.

5] Thy nature, gracious Lord, impart;
come quickly from above;
write Thy new name upon my heart,
Thy new best name of Love

Charles Wesley (1707- 1788)

Prayers of Intercession

Lord, in a world filled with chaos and conflict, we pray for Your peace. Bring harmony to troubled hearts and calm anxious minds. Let Your love overcome hatred, and may unity replace division. Fill every home and nation with Your presence and understanding.

We pray for those who are grieving and in pain. Wrap them in Your unending love and bring them peace in their sorrow. Wipe away their tears and remind them that You are always with them. Let them find hope and refuge in Your presence, knowing they are not alone.

Grant wisdom and integrity Lord to those in leadership. Help them to make decisions that are just and fair. Let them lead with compassion and humility. Guide their actions so they may serve others with honesty and righteousness.

Revive our hearts Lord and renew our faith. Let Your Spirit awaken a desire to seek You deeply that we may live according to Your will. Bring a spiritual awakening in our lives, homes, and communities.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen

Hymn

Jesus, You are changing me,
By your spirit, you're making me like you;
Jesus, you're transforming me,
That your loveliness may be seen in all I do.

You are the potter and I am the clay;
Help me to be willing to let you have your way;
Jesus, you are changing me
As I let you reign supreme within my heart.

Marilyn Baker (b. 1950)

Blessing

May God's love direct our actions,
God's truth be in our words,
God's joy infuse our spirit,
God's peace be in our hearts. Amen