

## Personal Prayer

Concluding with . . .

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



## FINAL PRAYER

Father, help us this week to yearn for the greatest treasure of all which is knowing more of you in our lives. May you be our first thought in the morning, our last thought at night and the inspiration throughout each day that we might live for your glory. Through Christ our Lord. Amen

## BLESSING

May the peace of God enfold us, the love of God uphold us,  
and the wisdom of God control us, this week and always. Amen

## PARISH PRAYER LIST

Johnny, Alice, Canon Ken, Bishop-elect George, Joyce,  
Eddie, Violet, Norman, Audra, Sylvia, Adam, Charlie



## Senior members resident in care homes

Nan, Isabel, Leslie, Lillian, Tom, Sally, Kay

**PARISH PRAYER LINE – TEL: 07553404711 (New)**



*St Aidan's re-opens for 'in  
church' worship on  
St Aidan's Day  
30 August*

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St Aidan's Parish Church

Enabling people to find a Living Faith in a Loving God by "Serving  
Christ in the Community"



**ONLINE WORSHIP 26<sup>th</sup> JULY : TRINITY 7**

## **'THE GREATEST TREASURE'**

*'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a  
field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy  
he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.'*

## PENITENCE

As we seek God's presence in worship today – and He IS present,  
wherever you are - we seek his cleansing from anything that is  
unworthy of Him in our lives, so that any barriers in our worship are  
demolished by the power of the cross.

In Church we normally use the prayer of confession on page 102 of the  
prayer book, but there are also some lovely hymns of penitence that  
can lead us close to God's heart. This is the first verse of one of them.

*Search me, O God, and know my heart today,  
Try me, O Saviour, know my thoughts, I pray;  
See if there be some wicked way in me;  
Cleanse me from every sin, and set me free.*

The second verse is one of assurance of forgiveness

*I praise Thee, Lord, for cleansing me from sin;  
Fulfil Thy word and make me pure within;  
Fill me with fire, where once I burned with shame;  
Grant my desire to magnify Thy name.*

The third verse is a prayer of commitment.

*Lord, take my life, and make it wholly Thine;  
Fill my poor heart with Thy great love divine;  
Take all my will, my passion, self and pride;  
I now surrender, Lord, in me abide.*

## READINGS FROM GOD'S WORD

### Old Testament Reading: 1 Kings 3.5-12

At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you." Solomon answered, "You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day.

"Now, LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?"

The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. So God said to him, "Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be.

### New Testament Reading: Matthew 13: 31-33, 44-52

He put before them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.'

He told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.'

'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; <sup>46</sup>on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat

down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

'Have you understood all this?' They answered, 'Yes.' And he said to them, 'Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.' **(Scroll down for meditation)**

## AFFIRMATION OF FAITH : THE APOSTLES CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again to judge the living and the dead

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

*Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!  
That calls me from a world of care,  
And bids me at my Father's throne  
Make all my wants and wishes known.  
In seasons of distress and grief,  
my soul has often found relief  
and oft escaped the tempter's snare  
by thy return sweet hour of prayer!*

## COLLECT OF THE DAY

Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things:  
Graft in our hearts the love of your name,  
increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness,  
and of your great mercy keep us in the same;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

## We get the message!

Jesus doesn't repeat himself very often in his teaching – unless the subject is vitally important – and certainly never as often (as far as I recall) as he does in these verses from Matthew 13.

In fact the few verses in today's reading contain these words five times, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is like . . .'

The parables are self-explanatory and we are left in no doubt that . . .  
the Kingdom of Heaven is limitless even from humble beginnings;  
the Kingdom is powerful in its effect;  
the Kingdom of Heaven is the most precious thing one can ever  
encounter;  
and the Kingdom of Heaven is not an automatic right for all who  
reject the gospel.

But what IS the Kingdom of Heaven?

Are you ready for a hundred sermons? No I guess not! So here it is in its simplest form. First of all the Kingdom of Heaven is precisely that – Heaven; the inheritance and destiny of all who love the Lord and our E.T.A. is 'The day of resurrection', 'The end of the world', or 'The return of Christ' – whichever you prefer! **(The phrase E.T.A. I borrow from the itinerary of travellers – 'Estimated Time of Arrival'!)**

HOWEVER the Kingdom has already begun where God rules and whilst Christians will not experience the full realisation of the Kingdom of Heaven until we get there – IT HAS ALREADY BEGUN IN OUR LIVES NOW! The Apostle Paul describes believers as 'Citizens of Heaven' - NOW.

Now of course living as citizens of Heaven in the world now brings many privileges but we also need to constantly remember that it brings many responsibilities; which is why the Apostle Paul urges his readers to LIVE as citizens of Heaven and is why Jesus reminded his followers that although they were IN the world they were not OF the world.

Hence the reason for his short 'parables' in our reading today.

Now I don't think for one moment that Jesus is calling us to dispose of everything we have so that we can buy into membership of God's Kingdom – we cannot buy our salvation. However I think he is making it clear here that we do need to make the kingdom of God our highest priority. If any earthly possession or ambition becomes more important than our commitment to follow Jesus, then Jesus cannot be LORD of our lives.

We are not living as Kingdom people.

So, the meaning of today's reading from Matthew is clear. We could indeed say, **"Lord, we get the message!"**

The following are some words from a lovely song penned recently by well know locally born hymn writers, Keith and Kristyn Getty and Stuart Townend (you can hear it on YouTube!)

*Hear the call of the kingdom, lift your eyes to the King,  
Let His song rise within you as a fragrant offering,  
Of how God, rich in mercy, came in Christ to redeem  
All who trust in His unfailing grace.*

*Hear the call of the Kingdom to be children of light,  
With the mercy of heaven, the humility of Christ.  
Walking justly before Him, loving all that is right  
That the life of Christ may shine through Him.*

*King of Heaven, we will answer the call,  
We will follow, bringing hope to the world,  
Filled with passion, filled with power to proclaim  
Salvation in Jesus' name.*

Ken