

Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Good morning and welcome to worship at MPN. Wherever and whenever you join us from we're glad to have you with us.

This week Growing with God finished the book Chasing Francis. I was struck by many quotes but this one has stuck this week

"Let us begin again,  
For us to now we have done nothing."

We come again into another week where lockdown is being opened up bit by bit and we again wait to meet in person to worship, but I am struck that each week we go forward with God and each week and each and every day we have that privilege to start again with a clean slate. We come into this time, to bring all our lives to God and to leave behind our fears and worries and come to worship God.

**Call to Worship**

**Church buildings, sacred spaces, gather us together.**

**Together (in isolation) we gather as one, though physically apart.**

**God be with us in our houses and homes, just as God is with us  
in our churches and cathedrals.**

**Come. Let us worship as God's scattered community.**

**As the farmer scatters the seed may the fruits of the Spirit  
be plentiful among us, wherever we may be.**

Reading Matthew 13:24-30,36-43

Talk 2 (Morag)

Growing up I was exposed to the goodies and the baddies. My dad had a great love for westerns. John Wayne and the likes would grace our TV and you would be in no doubt who the goodies and baddies were. The goodie had a white hat on and the baddy had a black hat and would be a sinister character who had to be stopped and captured. We were led to believe that you could spot a baddy straight away.

Today we hear again another of Jesus parables. This time we look at the parable of the weeds.

This parable looks at the age-old question why if God is all powerful and all loving is there evil in the world.

In this parable unlike the parable of the sower, where things got in the way, the path, the weeds etc., this parable the evil one is mentioned. The farmer planted only good seed, but the crop harvested both what he expected and also a different type of crop.

I don't know about you when you were growing up or even now when you ask young people when something has happened, you might get the Scottish answer "It was the big boy/girl who did it, it wisnae me!!" Even as adults sometimes we would love to say it wisnae me. But at the end of the day maturity brings with it the ability to deal with consequences. When we can deal with the situations around us and it is all about how we do deal with all the situations that life throws at us.

This parable blames the evil one or does it?

Many theologians think that it's unsatisfactory to just leave the parable there, with it wisnae me and the evil person did it.

I am not a gardener; I have been given plants that are supposed to be easy to grow and they still die. But I appreciate walking, especially right now when the wildflowers and weeds are growing, even on our grass verges by the main roads. In this lockdown they have been allowed to flourish and have thrived this year. A beautiful display for all to see. Nature just being left to its own devices.

*"A weed is just a flower in the wrong place."*

I love this saying. In all my years of working with young people, many of them written off from an early age. I was always reminded that no one started out to cause trouble and that as I would listen to their stories and dig a bit into their background, I was reminded of that quote. People flourish with the correct nurturing and conditions. Some of my young people had neither had anyone help them to thrive or come from the right conditions. In a sense what would they become if they were planted in the right place. For no one is wholly good or bad and life at times gives us circumstances that we deal with.

The first century Christians would have been well aware of Jesus teaching on the kingdom of God. They would know that they would keep trusting that the kingdom would come and they would wait for that day. The kingdom of God they would have known would turn the world upside down. What would be seen as acceptable to those around them, would be turned upside down in the kingdom of God.

I found this Covid Beatitudes really helpful and as we think of the world changing day by day right now, that promise of God's upside down kingdom speaks through it:

## Beatitudes for a global pandemic.

Blessed are those who stay indoors for they have protected others.

Blessed are the unemployed and the self-employed, for their need of God is great.

Blessed are the corner shopkeepers, for they are the purveyors of scarce things.

Blessed are the delivery drivers and the postal workers, for they are the bringers of essential things.

Blessed are the hospital workers; the ambulance crews, the doctors, the nurses, the care assistants, and the cleaners, for they stand between us and the grave, and the Kingdom of Heaven is surely theirs.

Blessed are the checkout workers, for they have patience and fortitude in the face of overwork and frustration.

Blessed are the refuse collectors, for they will see God despite the mountains of waste.

Blessed are the teachers, for they remain steadfast and constant in disturbing times.

Blessed are the church workers; the deacons, priests and bishops, for they are a comforting presence in a hurting world as they continue to signpost towards God.

Blessed are the single parents, for they are coping alone with their responsibilities and there is no respite.

Blessed are those who are alone, for they are children of God and with Him they will never be lonely.

Blessed are the bereaved, for whom the worst has already happened. They shall be comforted.

Blessed are those who are isolated with their abusers, for one day – we pray - they will know safety.

Blessed are all during this time who have pure hearts; all who still hunger and thirst for justice; all who work for peace and who model mercy. May you know comfort. May you know calm. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all. Amen.

By Jayne Manfredi @TheWomanfredi

The Kingdom of God is what we are asked to join in with here on earth. We pray Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Our faith is not for some far off day when we will see God face to face and spend eternity with him, although that will be nice but our faith has to change the world around us with kingdom values. These values right now are being acted out by many people during this very difficult time. The upside down kingdom will highlight the weeds and allow them to flourish and thrive into an expression of God's kingdom.

So we keep sowing and with the early Christians trust that the kingdom of God will come.

To God the Father,  
God the Son,  
God the Holy Spirit  
Amen.

A reminder that we meet on Zoom at 12 after the service for a coffee and catch-up. It was great to catch up with folks last week, just sorry I can't share my new coffee with you.

As we go into another week with God to build the kingdom wherever you are  
God with the Blessing of God Almighty  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit  
Be with you and remain with you and all those you love  
Now and forever more  
Amen.