



Ripon & Lower Dales Methodist Circuit  
With God in the City, Towns, Villages and rural areas

**Worship at Home**  
**week beginning 16<sup>th</sup> July 2023**  
**with Revd Gareth Baron**

**Good soil: hearing and understanding the word of the kingdom of God grows in us.**

**Welcome**

May you know the presence of our loving God near during this act of worship now and always. Let us worship the Lord our God in Spirit and truth.

**Prayer of approach & adoration**

All loving God who created all the beauty we see, hear and feel within soul lifting goodness of the earth.

We come with our hearts longing to love, worship and praise you.

We come in devotion, responding to the love you pour into our hearts.

We ask you to lead us by your Holy Spirit, that we might join with creation in glorifying your Holy Name. Amen.

**StF n°6 Father, we love you**

<sup>1</sup> Father, we love you,  
we worship and adore you:  
glorify your name in all the earth.  
Glorify your name,  
glorify your name,  
glorify your name, in all the earth.

<sup>2</sup> Jesus, we love you,  
we worship and adore you:  
glorify your name in all the earth.  
Glorify your name,  
glorify your name,  
glorify your name, in all the earth.

<sup>3</sup> Spirit, we love you,  
we worship and adore you:  
glorify your name in all the earth.  
Glorify your name,  
glorify your name,  
glorify your name, in all the earth.

**Prayer of confession**

Most merciful Lord, by your grace we confess our sins.

We confess that we have not loved you with all our heart, strength, soul or minds. And that we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.

For our neglect to strive to live out the greatest commandments, Lord, have mercy. Lord, forgive us.

We confess that we have been reluctant to grasp the opportunities you provide for us to serve you through serving others.

We have allowed our thoughts, words and deeds to deflect from pursuing holiness and giving you glory.

For our neglect to remain faithful in our obedience to you leading us,

Lord, have mercy. Lord, forgive us.

In our repentance we turn you Lord Jesus, may we hear you speak forgiveness into our hearts. Amen.

**Reading**

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

**The Parable of the Sower Explained**

'Hear then the parable of the sower. When 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. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the

one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet 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. As 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. But 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.'

### **Address**

Growing stuff in the garden or field is both rewarding and good for the soul. I don't have much experience in the way of growing crops, but have some success stories in the garden. Seeds are little things that hold great miracle potential. Yes, we have science to explain the biology of it all, but the wonder of witnessing a seed burst into life and bloom is magnificent and a miracle in my view.

The parable of the Sower told by Jesus provides us with a clear picture of the importance of being well rooted within God through Jesus. What's more, here in Matthew we are provided with the explanation Jesus gave about the parable. An explanation which we all might reflect upon, thinking about how we receive the seeds which God the Sower, sows within us.

How do you respond to hearing the word of the kingdom? Do you treasure it, do you take it to heart and hold it secure, that the birds nor the evil one can snatch it away?

How do you respond when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word of the kingdom and the living word of God, Jesus. Do we show joy on the surface but fail to allow God into the depths of our being?

How about distractions that cause us to put putting Jesus first, first on our to do list, allowing the 'just once I've dealt with the' other more worldly cares and desires. The delusional growth is matched only by those weeds we pretend aren't really weeds anyway.

Finally, do we respond to receiving the word of God by seeking to understand it. Understanding not by our own means. Rather, understanding sought through devoting ourselves to God in prayer, in reading with God and a pencil our bibles, and devoting ourselves to worshipping God in worship that is God led and Spirit filled.

Good soil is found when we allow God to cultivate good soil within us. This parable and explanation are for us all a challenging and encouraging message. It calls for earnest reflection and whilst it might mean spotting those birds looking for a quick feed, or identifying those weeds which are choking the life out of that which God is seeking to grow in us. When we do come earnestly as we are, we can better receive the seeds sowed, seeing growth in and through Jesus and discovering fruitful living, yielding more fruit because of Jesus.

Another view of this passage is to place the church as the Sower and those the gospel message is being shared with representing the various soil scenarios. We might at times hold this view, yet when it comes to God's Kingdom, God is the Sower, and we should be generous in living like the Sower. Just like any receiving the gospel message, we too need to ensure we don't neglect to make sure our soil is good and ready always to receive what God would sow in us and grow for God.

Culturally speaking, perhaps we ought to promote more community allotments, so that with others we can grow in God together. The world cannot deny the need for a better way of being humanity in relationship with each other and the earth we share living upon.

The word of the kingdom brings with its God's kingdom values and kingdom rule in our hearts and minds. It causes us to love God because we receive planted in us the love of God through Jesus. It causes us to love each other as we put into practice following the way of Jesus who taught through actions and examples that matched his words. It causes us to care for creation, recognising we are to tread lightly, taking care of the soil for all of God's creatures. Amen.

## StF n°450 Open, Lord, my inward ear.

<sup>1</sup>Open, Lord, my inward ear,  
and bid my heart rejoice;  
bid my quiet spirit hear  
your comfortable voice;  
never in the whirlwind found,  
or where earthquakes rock the place,  
still and silent is the sound,  
the whisper of your grace.

<sup>2</sup>From the world of sin, and noise,  
and hurry I withdraw;  
for the small and inward voice  
I wait with humble awe;  
silent am I now and still,  
dare not in your presence move;  
to my waiting soul reveal  
the secret of your love.

<sup>3</sup>You did undertake for me,  
for me to death were sold;  
wisdom in a mystery  
of bleeding love unfold;  
teach the lesson of your cross:  
let me die, with you to reign;  
all things let me count but loss,  
so I may you regain.

<sup>4</sup>Show me, as my soul can bear,  
the depth of inbred sin;  
all the unbelief declare,  
the pride that lurks within;  
take me, whom yourself have brought,  
bring into captivity  
every high aspiring thought  
and give humility.

<sup>5</sup>Lord, my time is in your hand,  
my soul to you convert;  
you can make me understand,  
though I am slow of heart;  
yours in whom I live and move,  
yours the work, your name divine;  
you are wisdom, power, and love,  
and all you are is mine.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

### Prayers with others.

Almighty God, aid us in our prayers as we  
join our prayers with others seeking comfort  
and strength; calling for justice and peace.

*Lord, sow the word of your kingdom in our  
hearts, and in your mercy, hear our prayers.*

We pray for our families and friends  
according to their needs. May the love we  
share nurture our relationships and  
strengthen one another.

*Lord, sow the word of your kingdom in our  
hearts, and in your mercy, hear our prayers.*

We pray for our neighbours and the  
community in which we live. We pray for the  
people we meet in the places we love and  
serve you Lord.

We pray especially for those struggling with  
the cost-of-living crises, for those  
experiencing oppression and the unbearable  
weight of struggle in their daily living.

We pray for those living with illness, with  
anxiety and with mental health concerns.

*Lord, sow the word of your kingdom in our  
hearts, and in your mercy, hear our prayers.*

We pray for those living in countries and  
places of war and conflict. We pray for the  
vulnerable, the fearful and those living with  
physical life changing injuries. We pray for  
those who are displaced, those who are  
bereaved and those separated from their  
loved ones. We pray for justice and peace to  
come to these lands. For comfort and healing  
to come to all those in need.

*Lord, sow the word of your kingdom in our  
hearts, and in your mercy, hear our prayers.*

We offer prayers for any other needs and  
situations that we hold in our hearts before  
God for others and ourselves...

*We ask all these prayers in the precious  
name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.  
Amen.*

### The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your Name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.

For yours is the kingdom, the power, and the  
glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

## StF n°407 Hear the call of the kingdom

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 us.

*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.*

Hear the call of the kingdom  
to reach out to the lost  
with the Father's compassion  
in the wonder of the cross,  
bringing peace and forgiveness,  
and a hope yet to come:  
let the nations put their trust in 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.*

Keith Getty (b. 1974)  
Kristyn Getty (b. 1980)  
and Stuart Townend (b. 1963)  
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### **Sending prayer.**

May we go forward in the knowledge and the  
love of God.  
May we be good soil people, who upon  
hearing and understanding the word of the  
kingdom, encourage the cultivation of good  
soil people in the places we live and the  
world.  
May we know the blessing of God, our  
sustainer, our comforter and our redeemer.  
May we be fruitful in blessing others as we go  
in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
Thanks be to God. Amen.