

KINGS NORTON BAPTIST CHURCH

Sunday 26th September 2021

See also 10 am Sunday 2nd October 2011

“A harvest of souls”

Welcome Thanks for those who put the display together, thank you to those who have brought something a service of thanks. Welcome children and parents.

Scripture Genesis 8:20-22
Give thanks to the Lord for he is good and faithful...

Hymn MP 200 **Great is thy faithfulness**

Reading Psalm 104:1-30

Prayer Pray of thankfulness

Part I Conkers, potatoes, cocoa etc.,

Hymn MP 732 **We plough the fields and scatter**

Part II read James 1:17-25 then “Christ the firstfruits to Heaven”

Choose songs MP 23 **All things bright and beautiful**

Notices Card for Dave.

Prayer time 6 x prayers from children, others then the Lord’s prayer.

Reading Show Luke’s gospel, read 8:(1),4-15

Hymn MP 106 **Come ye thankful people come.**

Part III The parable of the Sower

Hymn MP 367 **Jesus is Lord**

Doxology

Close -----

Exordium

Part I

■ Conker in prickly wrapping what is this? Conker, playing? what kind of tree is it from? Picture of Horse chestnut tree.

how do you get from one to the other? Amazing isn’t it!

■ Some pictures wheat, potatoes, cocoa etc

The seasons harvest time is now and we give thanks

The farm sows and goes away, everything is outside of his control

Jesus said **“A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces corn—first the stalk, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.”** Mr 4:26-29

God makes it grow –The Apostle Paul said: **“I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.** 1Co 3:6,7

The first part of the crop is given back to God as the first and best, we give him the best, all we have come from him and belongs to him so if you honour him by giving him the first part them he will give you more.

Jesus is described as the first fruits – we will think more about that in a moment.

Part II

Read James 1:17-25 - **Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.**

My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.

He is not just saying we should have good social skills and be a ready listener – to each other – but to listen to God, to listen to his word. God’s word should cause a change, it should do something

Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent, and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely

listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.” Jas 1:17-25

Every good and perfect gift is from God above.

Did you notice it spoke about making us as firstfruits? In other words God is looking for a crop of people, men and women, boys and girls who will live a Holy and separate life and be taken to heaven when you leave this world. In fact this short life is the preparation for heaven.

■ Like those athletes in the Tokyo Olympic games who trained long and hard. The model, the champion is Jesus. To live a life like Jesus. He is the one who died and rose again and has gone ahead to heaven.

HEAVEN

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Jesus the firstfruits who has gone ahead. That means others can come to - You can come to, Jesus says if you follow me you can come to heaven as well, **I am the Way**, I can take you there, without me you can do nothing. I have made it possible by dying on the cross to take away the sin of those who will turn from it.

CROSS

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- Name sins – stealing, lying selfishness, disobeying parents, etc.
- Rubber large and small all need to be erased

I can and will forgive you if you turn to me –

You don't have to die on the cross as I did – but you do have to die to self. Stop living selfishly and turn to me Jesus says and he will take you to heaven.

Have you been listening? - This will only happen Jesus said if you listen to my words and do something about it.

Part III

The parable of the sower

A new year certainly and a new school? Possibly

✚ Did you have a talk at the beginning, soon after you moved up to say how important it is to work hard, achieve your potential and make the most of your time here. Etc. etc. Well you may not have been listening too closely but simply put he is saying “you get out what you put in” yes that is a basic principle in life if you put in good things you will do better than if you spend your time on bad things. God says in the Bible “you reap what you sow”.

What you are taught at school is aimed making you think. It is more than spoon-feeding you with facts. The question is what will you do with them? Can you think, draw the right conclusions, and think how it applies to you and what you have to do. That is what really matters.

The parables of Jesus are a constant challenge to think. Jesus never spoon-fed His hearers. He made great demands upon them; not so much upon them – not that they are difficult to understand - but rather upon their wills: He wanted them to think and to come to decisions. He wants you to ask, "What does this mean? Why has He said this? What is He getting at?" what should I do?"

Is there is a certain kind of response expected from me. What is it? Am I prepared to make it?

Jesus speaks about this **SEED** he says that the kingdom of God is like a farmer who scattered seed, good seed and it all fell in different places

■ Show handful of seed

The seed is the word of God, x2, the words that you hear Jesus speak.

For example: Jesus said **I am the way the truth and the life....** No-one.

Jesus is life – if you have him then you have life – if you do not have him then you do not have life

Jesus said: “**if anyone wants to come after me he must deny himself, take up his cross..... and follow me.**”

So **Enter in through the narrow gate.....**

The farmer scatters the seed and it falls in different places.....

Pathway

The first place was on the pathway. it was hard with its flattened earth. If you had a ball it would have bounced back up at you. The birds like the seed for it is nourishing. For them the seed that fall on the pathway is easy to pick up and take off with. **Hard table top**

Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved.” V13

Jesus says that this is how some people respond to the word of God being spoken. when they hear it is immediately snatched away. as soon as it is heard it is **GONE**. It is as if it just bounces off. It is quickly

That person is a hard person. For them it is all like water off a ducks back it just rolls away. The soil, the heart is just too **HARD**

Among the rocks

The next place that the seed falls on is the stony ground. here the seed quickly bears shoots and it all looks very promising but because the earth only in between rocks it is **SHALLOW** When the sun comes out and the heat rises it quickly withers, dries up and dies.

Some people are like that when they hear the word of God they love it as a great new and good thing but a few weeks later it is gone.

- They come to Crusaders for a few weeks because it is all new and exciting but soon they lose interest.

- I see them and they say I would rather play out with their friends

I think how enthusiastic they were at the beginning and how it has all gone. Their interest had no depth, quickly changed their mind.

“Those on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away.” Lu 8:13 **SHALLOW**

Thorns

Then there is a third category. here the seed falls on the earth but there is much already growing there; weeds and thistles etc. The good seed has so much competition. it wants to grow but all the other things get in the way and stop it. This is the person who is looking in lots of different directions at once.

- I used to pick up one young man who came to church. He was always quick to show me his nice Bible but he never spoke about what was inside, he spent all his time talking about football.

Text yesterday, “sorry I can’t come on Sunday I have too much going on” They love this and love that and the things of God get choked and squeezed out. you could say when it came to their soul and turning to Jesus they are just too **BUSY**.

“The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life’s worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature.” Lu 8:14

That young man I mentioned if far from God and his life if a mess. **DISTRACTED**

These first three categories come very easily to us. in a sense we are all like this. If you do not see yourself here then you are here!

To live like this is to squeeze out the one who deserves to have your full attention and love The bible calls this **SIN**. Sin is serious for it drives us away to God. the worse way to die is to die in our sin. To escape God's anger we must seek forgiveness NOW. We cannot clear our own guilt that is costly. no less than the Son of God Jesus Christ can take God's anger away effectively from us onto himself and set us free from guilt **CROSS**. Those who have been forgiven know God and his power in their life. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead. That person can now live very differently. See anything different about certain people who are followers of Jesus?

Good soil

Yes this is the last one, in their lives they bear **FRUIT**. In the parable that Jesus said it was not just a little fruit but much fruit. What does that fruit stand for? It is a real keenness to be like Jesus, humble, loving, patient, quick to thank God for everything, and to enjoy being with God day by day.

“But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.” 15

God made you and each of us that so we will live life to the max with Him, and to bear fruit, of love joy peace, patience etc. **FRUITFULNESS**

Peroration

Which one are you? You are one of those mentioned, is it 1,2,3, or 4?

May I remind everyone here today your essential duty is to pursue God. We are all confronted with Jesus and his claims. We all live in the context of God. We cannot escape Him. This is His world; and since we live in it we cannot really hope to avoid Him; and all our efforts to do so are vanity and sin. God stands over against us all. In Him we live and move and have our being. Are we glad that this is so? Or do we live as if we wish it were not true? God speaks, he speaks to you: will you listen? Or will you shut your ears in unbelief?

All of your life is in some degree a response to God: are you saying Yes - or No? God is not the object of a discussion. He is not the last, irreducible term in a long argument. He is the living God with whom we have to do.

Today we gather to give thanks to this living God whose bounty has once more provided for our bodily need. We rejoice that the seeds sown and tended by farmers have brought to us their harvest. Their toil has not been in vain, despite all the hazards of nature against which their life is one long battle. No matter what the odds have been, we have good cause to raise the song of harvest home; and the Bible makes its demand on us that we should see this as a parable of another sowing and search our hearts about that other harvest.

Here Jesus has described four ways people respond to God's Word of grace, four ways in which the seed of the Word is received, and if we look at them carefully, you will see your hearts the more clearly.

Will you do what Jesus says and therefore make the great discovery that as you follow Jesus, you can have God as your father and be sure of going to heaven when you leave this world.

May that be the true experience of everyone in this room.

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