

Kings Norton Baptist Church

Sunday 2nd October 2022 10 am

Harvest thanksgiving Service (combined with Crusaders)

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.

Opening Scripture Genesis 8:22

Hymn **MP 200 Great is thy faithfulness**

Scripture Genesis 8:15-22

Prayer Give thanks to the Lord for he is good and faithful....

■ 1 Giving thanks

Prayer time 6 x prayers from children.

Notices Thank you for those who have done the Harvest display. Fellowship Lunch bring and share Communion next Sunday. No Crus, Ukraine, Op Doors

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

Reading John 12:20-26 (page 1080)

■ 2 Seed falling to the ground

Song **MP 23 All things bright and beautiful**

Prayer Lord's prayer

Reading John 15:1-8, (page 1083) (Isaiah 5 & 27 & 63, Ps 80)

■ 3 Growing well

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

Close

Reading Psalm 104:1-30 select verses

1. Giving thanks

We have just read of a God who made everything - and he made it good, for he is good. He made it for you to enjoy, food all - of it - can be eaten, clothing, toys, entertainment, [hold up pics](#) the air, the sun, to shine sky and all those birds, gardens and the wild with all the animals, the sea and all the fish in it.

Enjoy, but thank him, don't forget, x2 Thank Him ^

For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, 1 Tim 4:4 - yes all **which God created to be received with thanksgiving.** 1 Tim 4:3

And that means not only material things but also our families are God's good way of helping us have love and security - and all we need in life. That is why families are so important and we should do everything to keep them together. In fact God says that the first sign that we love him is that we take care of those in our family and not leave it to others to support them.

God listens to every word that we say and that there should be no bad words, jokiness, foolish talk, **but rather thanksgiving.** Eph 5:4

The God who provides all we have also says "trust me, ask me, trust me" **Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.** Phil 4:6 He says "try me in this I can do even more than you expect"

✚ Do you say "Thank you"? will you say "thank you"?

To do so is to say Lord I am needy and I look to you - you are so generous.

To say thank you is to give God his right place as the great source of all goodness and the provider of all we need.

And if someone else does not have as much as you then when you give to help them - as you have by bringing food this morning - then they will give thanks to God and he is given his right place.

You will be made rich in every way - yes we all are rich in many ways - and why - **so that you can be generous on every occasion, and your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.** 2 Cor 9:11

The problem is that many people never say 'thank you'. They eat food every day and never stop to say 'thank you'.

Do people do things for you? have you thanked them?. Some hardly ever stop to think to say thank you.

We read about people in Psalm 78 who **did not keep God's covenant and refused to live by his law. They forgot what he had done, the wonders he had shown them.** 10,11

God had shown that he could provide but **they continued to sin against him, rebelling in the desert against the Most High. They wilfully put God to the test by demanding the food they craved. They spoke against God, saying, "Can God spread a table in the desert?"** 17-19

Then God stopped providing, he even brought punishment and when He did this **Whenever God slew them, they would seek him; they eagerly turned to him again. They remembered that God was their Rock, that God Most High was their Redeemer.**

But then they would lie to him with their tongues; their hearts were not loyal to him, they were not faithful.

Yet he was merciful; he forgave their sins and did not destroy them. Time after time he restrained his anger and did not stir up his full wrath. He remembered that they were but flesh, a passing breeze that does not return.

Jesus says simply put me first and I will sort out the rest: **"seek first me and my kingdom and my righteousness, (and that means that God will accept you through Him) and all these things will be given to you as well."** Mat 6:33

■ "Ever had the teacher that say to you "don't look over there, don't be distracted look this way", ever had that?

So Jesus says to you: "Look to me, trust me, and I will take care of all you need, don't worry about that, look to me." He is able, many have found him so.

2. Falling to the ground

Soon the ground will be covered with these

■ **Conker, ever played conkers?**

The conker is from which tree? Horse Chestnut, there is a chestnut tree [PIC](#)

■ **Horse chestnut trees can live for up to 300 years and, at their largest, can reach heights of 40 metres with 2 meter wide trunks.**

■ **It came from Turkey in the late 16th century. And was planted first in palace gardens and then all over England.**

■ **The word 'conker' originally derived from the word 'conch' and the game was first played using snail shells. The first ever conker game was played on the Isle of White in 1848.**

It looks nice doesn't it, shiny, smooth, colourful

I don't play conkers that often these days, I have some other things to do, but I have to admit to stooping down to pick up a conker when I see one as nice as this. It comes home with me and sit on the desk for a while.

But do you know what I have never done? That is dug a little hole and put it into the ground. Why do that? It would get dirty, I would lose it.

But here what Jesus said:

Joh 12:24 **I tell you the truth, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.**

Jesus used this to show what his death would do.

Many thought his death was the greatest disaster in the whole world.

Death often feels like that.

But not with him. His death was a way of bringing life - for he rose again. Yes his death brought him life - one death one life, - we can see that.

But no, his one death actually means that many can live.

if the seed dies, it produces many seeds. When Jesus died it produced life for many.

Adam the first man brought in death not only for himself but for us all - **For if many died by the trespass, the sin of one man (Adam) - how much more did the gift of life come through the death - of one man (Jesus)**" Romans 5:15f

Jesus is saying to those who are asking - and they are the ones who represent people from all around the world - I have to die to bring you life - all of you.

The conker is not only from the Horse Chestnut tree, it produces a Horse Chestnut tree!

....and does that tree have just one conker on it? It has ...conkers on it.

As putting one conker in the ground produces many conkers so Jesus had to die and be buried so as to bring life for many people.

Jesus says as I have died so must you, - die to yourself.

✚ **I don't mean kill yourself - but kill your love for yourself, All of us are naturally self loving.**

So what about you?

25 The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

You have a choice, you can either live your life for God and be with him forever – or you can love your life now – but will one day lose it.

Life is full of choices – and this is the greatest choice.

✚ Who will you serve? Gain self today and lose it tomorrow? – or will you serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

26 Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me.

The seed falling to the ground and dying is the only way to bring more Jesus' death and life is the means of bringing many more to life? Are you one of them? You can be if you turn to him now.

3. Growing well

(For more material see 12_10_07.doc using Vi_92.cdr)

■ Very fast growing plants – Bamboo, a metre a day, that's 0.7mm/min

So the question is how fast are you growing? Is it amazingly fast? or medium speed? or slow? or maybe you are not growing at all?

Because we live in 'time' we are all changing, you cannot avoid that, you and I are not the same as we were yesterday, but how are you changing? Are you changing for the better?, or just growing older?

There comes a time when you find yourself too old and you wish you had done more while you could!

Scripture: God says we are to grow, and grow in Grace – that is to be like Jesus who is the example of a perfect life. In fact Jesus grew in many ways not just from a boy into a man - but grew in knowledge, grew in wisdom, grew in his character.

We are told **Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.** Luke 2:52. So too should you and I.

Samuel was a boy who gave his life to the Lord God, and the same is said about him: **And the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favour with the LORD and with men.** 1 Samuel 2:26

3a

That should be true for me, and it should be true for you. Yes for me and for you - and for you, - and for you, each one of you, are you?

Jesus was speaking about a vine, we are going to put the vine in a:

Pot

And into the pot we put the **soil**. Jesus often speaks about our heart being like the soil.

What is your heart like? Is your heart soft - or hard and stony?

Heart

■ Olympic area of London huge reclamation programme - a mountain of rubble sieving out the stones from the soil.

Seed

The seed stands for **Jesus**, he is the only source for the vine picture. Do you have Jesus? x2 have you turned to him to grow your life? He's the only good starting point for anything. Wrong seed, wrong plant. Make sure you don't start with the wrong seed.

■ It is like buying a pack of seeds and planting them only to discover they end up with not only a different colour but even different plant

Some people are only feed themselves on fast food, lots of TV, videos, phone time. And thinking about themselves, how they look, and who likes them.

How will they grow? Not very well. They will grow – but in a bad way.

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Gal 6:7

One girl I know always likes to be the centre of attention. She doesn't really like helping others. that is pleasing their sinful nature

■ Someone told me of how he had been laughed at by others, and he said to me last week that he wanted to get his own back.

He is acting in pride, he has not considered that **The one who sows to please his sinful nature, that is my flesh, that is all the things that I want - from that nature will reap destruction;**

✚ And if you won't forgive others don't expect God to forgive you.

✚ God will treat you the way you treat others, if you are generous, God will be generous with you.

So let us all make sure we grow well, **the one who sows to please the Spirit of God, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.** Galatians 6:7-8

3b

So let's think about what we need to grow well. A good seed will take root in good soil and grow

Plant

- Is this wood a tree or a post? **What's the difference between a Tree and a Post?** - Plant a tree and it begins to grow; set a post and it begins to decay. Which are you, a tree or a post? The Moody Bible Institute Monthly.

Good seed - in good soil - will produce a good harvest.

The fruit of godliness

This is how it should be there must be a 'Harvest of Godliness'

What is the fruit? **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.** (Gal 5:22, 23)

Love for God, earnestness & zeal for holiness, for the gospel for the Kingdom of God - That is the harvest of righteousness!

Some plants have so little fruit, so little it's hard to find, or none at all.

- like feeling through the foliage for a little berry

The fruit is like the root – *"If Christ is the root then – Christ-likeness will be the fruit"*

- ✦ Is Christ living IN you? If so we should see the fruit of righteousness = Christ-likeness

To make sure things grow properly there must be:

Water / rain

it needs water, The nourishment of the word - **Christ's word**

What would happen to the plant without water?

It would flop down and die

- Tomato plants are like that if you don't water them

So do we all - **Man does not live of bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God**

It is like food to us, very important otherwise we fade away

- Some plants if you don't water them every day in the summer struggle to survive.

Each one of us need to read, listen hear and act on, the word of God. It is our food to keep us strong and fresh.

- Once in the midst of the **vineyard** there was one **grapevine** that was poor and sickly looking and stood out from the rest of the vineyard of strong and flourishing vines. Year after year the vine

4a

was sickly. Finally the owner started to dig the ground to find the reason why. He found an **abandoned well** which had been covered over with a circle of **wood** and shallow earth thrown on top. The vine had very long roots dangling in the thin air of the well. Perhaps your soul is like that. You have not been well rooted and are getting no nourishment from the Word of God. You will be a sickly Christian, bearing no fruit, unless you get your roots firmly established in Him.

Without knowing God's word you are just left with confusion and doubts

God speaks to us through his word, you do not know him well if we do not read his word - Jesus says **if you love me you will obey my commandments**

- Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman had what he called "My rule for Christian living": "The rule that governs my life is this: anything that dims my vision of Christ, or takes away my taste for Bible study, or cramps my prayer life, or makes Christian work difficult, is wrong for me, and I must, as a Christian, turn away from it." Watchman-Examiner

It also needs

Sunshine

Nothing grows in the dark – except mushrooms and we are not that!

What can we liken the sun to? Well perhaps: **the spirit of Jesus**

- ✦ .. that brings his life to us and lights up our hearts so we can see clearly.

God made his light shine 6 **For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."** (2Co 4:6)

Ever thought I just can't do the right things, Doing what God wants is just too hard? without Christ it is impossible. With Christ's Spirit living in you, - you can, and you will want to.

- God is not looking for sticky fungi but grapes - good fruit

Warmth

We could say that this is the result of meeting with others who are living for Christ and his kingdom. **Christ's people**

There is no such thing as a Christian who stays at home.

We are not just believers in God, there are plenty of those, but we belong to him – and as the body of Christ are connected to each other

When we are together we are heated up, as we help each other, the fire is stoked up inside us.

4b

To not join with others is to grow cold, it leads to less and less enthusiasm – and that person doesn't realise it.

Become cold and Christ's word, Christ ways and His people and his kingdom become less and less important slowly slip back into the world, and you never make progress

- Like being on a rocking-horse - plenty of motion - but no progress. Gospel Herald.

Worldly things become more interesting and absorb our time

- Someone by the sea was watching a pretty little vessel with its white sail shining in the sunlight. "How is it that ship does not seem to be moving?" he said to a seaman standing by. "Her sails are spread and there's plenty of breeze, but she seems to make no progress." "She's anchored," replied the sailor. - That's just how it is with some - no progress at all because they are anchored to something here on earth—some sin, or some worldly way that won't be given up and let go of.

- Holiday a man on small sailing boat trying hard to free a stuck anchor

Spend time with Christians and avoid the worlds' ways - "ungodly company corrupts godly character" **"Keep your spiritual fervour serving the Lord"**

Being together is God's way – that is why we are having lunch together afterwards, talking, listening and helping each other.

The biggest hindrance to growing well is that something else is growing.

Weeds and thistles

- Just do nothing and they will come - like the ground cleared as houses are demolished on the estate, the ground has been left - What is there now? Tall weeds

Where did they come from? Little seeds flew in. The person caring for the soil need only to do – nothing - and this will happen

So give continual attention to your life!

- ✚ Make sure the soil is good – your heart is good – and feed it well!

- **Still Growing** - At Hampton Court Palace, one of the most famous grapevines in the world is trained over a high-arched trellis under a glass roof. It has been growing there for 160 years, and last year it ripened 600 fine clusters of delicious grapes. It has the best of expert care, and shows no sign of dying.—Girls' World.

- ✚ Have all of the above and you will produce fruit

- - There must be progress in a Christian's life often **Unconscious Progress** when you may not seem to be going a-head—like a canal boat in a lock, when it stands still but is rising all the time.— D. L. Moody,

You are changing – but are you growing to be like Jesus? to be like him will get you ready for heaven. Have the right ingredients and you will grow well Are you a fast grower like a bamboo? Or are you the slowest,. Which is...

- The saguaro cactus " is the slowest growing plant in the world. It only grows 1" per year.

So slow it is hard to see anything change. Make sure that is not you.

- ✚ Start today - Make sure that soil is the best it can be - so that the plant and the fruit is the best it can be – For the Lord.

END