

## **Worship at home – 26<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

**Key: Scriptures:** Matthew 13:31-33 – The parables of the mustard seed and yeast

### **The Parable of the Mustard Seed**

<sup>31</sup> Jesus told them another parable: "The Kingdom of heaven is like this. A man takes a mustard seed and sows it in his field. <sup>32</sup> It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it grows up, it is the biggest of all plants. It becomes a tree, so that birds come and make their nests in its branches."

### **The Parable of the Yeast**

<sup>33</sup> Jesus told them still another parable: "The Kingdom of heaven is like this. A woman takes some yeast and mixes it with a bushel of flour until the whole batch of dough rises."

**Key Themes: A small faith in the hands of God can become something mighty.**

### **Call to Worship:**

As we enter God's Holy presence this morning are you ready to hear again about God's kingdom? Come, open your hearts and minds to see the kingdom around us and within us. Come, and worship the living God.

### **Hymn: Build Your Kingdom Here**

[Rend Collective](#)

Build Your kingdom here  
Let the darkness fear  
Show Your mighty hand  
Heal our streets and land  
Set Your church on fire  
Win this nation back  
Change the atmosphere  
Build Your kingdom here  
We pray

Come set Your rule and reign  
In our hearts again  
Increase in us we pray  
Unveil why we're made  
Come set our hearts ablaze with hope  
Like wildfire in our very souls  
Holy Spirit come invade us now  
We are Your Church  
And we need Your power  
In us  
We seek Your kingdom first  
We hunger and we thirst  
Refuse to waste our lives  
For You're our joy and prize  
To see the captive hearts released  
The hurt, the sick, the poor at peace  
We lay down our lives for Heaven's cause  
We are Your church  
And we pray revive  
This earth (We're prayin' for revival)

Build Your kingdom here  
Let the darkness fear  
Show Your mighty hand  
Heal our streets and land  
Set Your church on fire  
Win this nation back  
Change the atmosphere  
Build Your kingdom here  
We pray (Change the atmosphere)

Unleash Your kingdom's power  
Reaching the near and far  
No force of hell can stop  
Your beauty changing hearts  
You made us for much more than this  
Awake the kingdom seed in us  
Fill us with the strength and love of Christ  
We are Your church  
Oh, and we are the hope  
On earth

Build Your kingdom here  
Let the darkness fear  
Show Your mighty hand  
Heal our streets and land  
Set Your church on fire  
Win this nation back  
Change the atmosphere  
Build Your kingdom here  
We pray (Change the atmosphere, build Your kingdom here)

### **Prayers:**

Lord God, as we gather in our homes, let us find a peace and space where we can touch with you. Thank you, Lord that each one of us is unique, yet we share a common bond in you. We come together in Spirit even though we are physically apart, we are still one body of the Church. Help us learn and experience things in different ways. We thank you for your amazing word that gives us so many pictures of your kingdom. The kingdom you wish to build here in this place. In these pictures there is something for everyone, something to feed our hearts and minds. Be with us Lord and bless us richly as we call upon your name. Amen.

O God, mere words cannot convey what a privilege it is to be heirs to your kingdom. As we explore your word today, help us to learn about new treasures as well as old. May we see the amazing things you can do in our lives. We are part of your kingdom, and we come to you in awe and wonder. Amen

Lord God, sometimes I feel so set in my ways. I'm not always ready to give something up to gain the thing of value that you promise.

**Forgive me, Lord, as I open my heart to you.**

I want to keep my treasures locked up in a storeroom, safe from prying eyes.

**Forgive me, Lord, as I open my heart to you.**

Sometimes I just expect things on a plate. I'm not always ready to work for something that you call me to do.

**Forgive me, Lord, as I open my heart to you.**

I do want to be the yeast in my world; but I'm not always ready to be pummelled, or to give up my easy life.

**Forgive me, Lord, as I open my heart to you.**

Sometimes I take my eyes off you and feel so lost. Bring me back please, Lord.

**Forgive me, Lord, as I open my heart to you.**

**Amen**

## **Psalm 119:129-136 - Good News Translation (GNT)**

### **Desire to Obey the Law of the LORD**

<sup>129</sup> Your teachings are wonderful;

I obey them with all my heart.

<sup>130</sup> The explanation of your teachings gives light  
and brings wisdom to the ignorant.

<sup>131</sup> In my desire for your commands  
I pant with open mouth.

<sup>132</sup> Turn to me and have mercy on me  
as you do on all those who love you.

<sup>133</sup> As you have promised, keep me from falling;  
don't let me be overcome by evil.

<sup>134</sup> Save me from those who oppress me,  
so that I may obey your commands.

<sup>135</sup> Bless me with your presence  
and teach me your laws.

<sup>136</sup> My tears pour down like a river,  
because people do not obey your law.

### **Reflection:**

- The time in this strange new world is going on.
- As the country begins to ease out of lockdown, we as the church still find ourselves in a difficult situation.
- On the one hand it would be great to re-open and to see everyone again.
- On the other hand many of our members are still shielding and fall into that "at risk" bracket.
- I don't really know what is right or wrong, I think we all have to weigh that up for ourselves, and not be pushed into something that we feel uncomfortable about.
- One thing we can be sure about in the middle of all the uncertainty is that God's love is constant.
- His teachings are wonderful, his word is to be relied on.
- He has promised that he will be with us always, even to the end of the age.
- Recently, I have revisited the Footprints poem by Carolyn Carty, and I was reminded of that story and how God carries us when we are at our most difficult times, when there is only one set of footprints in the sand.
- The psalmist encourages us as well to be uplifted as God is with us and his promises are true.

**Reading: Matthew 13:31-33**

## **The Parable of the Mustard Seed**

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## **The Parable of the Yeast**

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**Matthew 44-52 – The parable of the hidden treasure and the Pearl.**

## **The Parable of the Hidden Treasure**

<sup>44</sup> "The Kingdom of heaven is like this. A man happens to find a treasure hidden in a field. He covers it up again, and is so happy that he goes and sells everything he has, and then goes back and buys that field.

## **The Parable of the Pearl**

<sup>45</sup> "Also, the Kingdom of heaven is like this. A man is looking for fine pearls, <sup>46</sup> and when he finds one that is unusually fine, he goes and sells everything he has, and buys that pearl.

## **The Parable of the Net**

<sup>47</sup> "Also, the Kingdom of heaven is like this. Some fishermen throw their net out in the lake and catch all kinds of fish. <sup>48</sup> When the net is full, they pull it to shore and sit down to divide the fish: the good ones go into the buckets, the worthless ones are thrown away. <sup>49</sup> It will be like this at the end of the age: the angels will go out and gather up the evil people from among the good <sup>50</sup> and will throw them into the fiery furnace, where they will cry and gnash their teeth.

## **New Truths and Old**

<sup>51</sup> "Do you understand these things?" Jesus asked them.

"Yes," they answered.

<sup>52</sup> So he replied, "This means, then, that every teacher of the Law who becomes a disciple in the Kingdom of heaven is like a homeowner who takes new and old things out of his storage room."

## **Reflection:**

- Matthew's gospel this week offers us 6 parables showing us what the kingdom of God is like.
- The first two speak of a mustard seed and yeast.

- Something that starts small and grows into something much bigger.
- During lockdown Theo had joined a cooking school and one of the things he has cooked has been bread.
- He had to take the small packet of dried yeast, feed it with some warm water and flour and place it somewhere warm to rise.
- It expanded to at least three times its original size.
- In other words, God's kingdom appears to be small but it expands beyond all measure and understanding.
- Faith can be as small as a mustard seed or a grain of yeast and yet in God's hands it can grow into something amazing.
- The next two parables both convey something of the huge value of the kingdom in comparison with anything else life might offer.
- Pearls were more valuable than gold at that time.
- The kingdom is worth more than anything.
- The parable of the net that indiscriminately catches fish, both good and bad, comes with an explanation. It is similar to the parable of the wheat and the weeds, in speaking of the separation of good from evil that will happen at the end of the age.
- Finally, Jesus tells a parable about teachers within the kingdom.
- Scribes were those who interpreted God's instructions in the scriptures in order that the people would know how to live God's way.
- This parable may indicate that, in the kingdom, those who have been trained in kingdom ways (as the disciples have) will draw on their Jewish heritage of knowing God's ways but also on the new things that Jesus is showing them.
- I wonder what we might learn from these parables as we go forward and come out of lockdown.
- Maybe our faith has wavered at point over the last few months?
- Maybe we have been unsure where God is, as the familiarity of our church building have not been open to us.
- May we have felt that our faith has been as small as a mustard seed, or a grain of yeast.
- Maybe today God wants to tell you to place that grain or seed in His hands so that he can expand it and make it grow.
- Maybe we have valued this time to go deeper into our faith.
- To have questions posed that you can then answer in your own time, and when you feel ready.
- Maybe you have been able to grow and value your relationship with God so much more?
- Maybe lockdown has made you think a little more about who is in and who is out and that God has room for all those that believe in him, and those that don't will be cast aside.
- Maybe we can think of ourselves as modern-day disciples, for that is what we are, and maybe we are teachers of the gospel message in our day and time.
- Maybe we need to be ready to draw on all that we know of the church before but lockdown also be ready to embrace the new, building on the lessons we have learned.
- I wonder if these parables will shape us and show us what the kingdom of God is like so we can build that kingdom here.

### ***Prayers of Intercession:***

Lord, you took so much care to describe your kingdom in ways everyone could understand, including us.

Your kingdom come

**Your will be done.**

We pray today that you will pass on to us that gift of making ourselves accessible. Keep us: From being a stumbling block to those who would seek you;

From using language that puzzles  
From actions that confuse  
From anything that keeps us apart from your people around us  
Your kingdom come  
**Your will be done.**

We pray for those we know who are sick, lonely or in need of our prayers at this time, we think particularly of:

Paul Davies – Seaton  
Pam Lucas – Seaton  
Brain Margets – Dalwood  
Mary Long - Axminster  
Mary Berry – Dalwood.  
Audrey Hicks – Axminster

And we remember those we know who have died in the past two weeks:

Barbara Southcome – Sidford  
John Rayson – Sidmouth  
Jean Barclay - Sidmouth

**Amen**

**Hymn:** The kingdom of God is justice and joy;

The kingdom of God is justice and joy;  
for Jesus restores  
what sin would destroy.  
God's power and glory  
in Jesus we know  
and here and hereafter  
the kingdom shall grow.

2 The kingdom of God  
is mercy and grace;  
the captives are freed,  
the sinners find place,  
the outcast are welcomed  
God's banquet to share;  
and hope is awakened  
in place of despair.

3 The kingdom of God  
is challenge and choice:  
believe the good news,  
repent and rejoice!  
His love for us sinners  
brought Christ to his cross:  
our crisis of judgement  
for gain or for loss.

4 God's kingdom is come,  
the gift and the goal;  
in Jesus begun,

in heaven made whole.  
The heirs of the kingdom  
shall answer his call  
and all things cry 'Glory!'  
to God all in all.

**Blessing:**

Lord. It's not up to us to sort the bad from the good, the wheat from the weeds. Rather, send us out to love everyone equally, and to do everything we can to promote your kingdom.

**Amen**