

A Service of Reflection from the Western Fells Methodist Circuit by Jackie Davies 13th June 21

Welcome and prayer. Please join us in worship knowing that others share in worship with you. We pray that these words may encourage you in your journey with Christ.

Almighty God, we praise you for your creation. We thank you for your presence with us and for your love for each one of us.

We thank you for your grace, for your forgiveness, for your mercy.

Bless us Lord during this time of worship and always. **Amen**

Hymn StF 137

Here are some verses of a hymn that speaks to us about God's everlasting love for us.

1. *New every morning is the love
our wakening and uprising prove;
through sleep and darkness safely brought,
restored to life, and power and thought.*
2. *New mercies, each returning day
hover around us while we pray;
new perils past, new sins forgiven,
new thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven.*
John Keble (1792-1866)

Prayer. And so let us say together the Lord's Prayer: Our Father

Bible Reading Mark 4: 26-34

The Parable of the Growing Seed ²⁶ He also said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, ²⁷ and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. ²⁸ The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. ²⁹ But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come."

The Parable of the Mustard Seed ³⁰ He also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? ³¹ It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; ³² yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

The Use of Parables³³ With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; ³⁴ he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

Reflection

Jesus taught using illustrations that people would have known about. In these two parables, Jesus refers specifically to the Kingdom of God. The sower plants the seed, but he or she doesn't know precisely how it grows or how well it will do. Growth takes place, whether they are awake or asleep. They can provide the best conditions that are in their gift, but ultimately God causes the seed to grow. Not all seed will grow and it is not all down to us.

If you watch BBC Springwatch, you might have seen two pictures sent in by a viewer, taken one year apart, both of the same area of parkland. Last year's pictures showed plants much further on than the same plants this year. The weather, the climate and perhaps other things will have made a difference.

The existence of the mustard seed, shows us that big plants can grow from small seeds. If you enjoy fruit, think of the size of the seeds of many things that we can buy in our local shops or grow in our gardens.

Different seeds produce crops, trees, vines, vegetables or flowers.

Next time, if you enjoy an apple, consider the pips that form the seed and that from them, a tree might grow. The Kingdom of God is like that.....

The endings of Jesus's parables were not always as expected.

If you were listening to Jesus, as his listeners were in an occupied country, you might expect him to say the Kingdom of God is all powerful, maybe like an earthquake perhaps? But no, Jesus tells them that the Kingdom of God is like a small seed, from which great things can grow.

A message of hope to each one of us.

Amen.

Prayers for others.

We bring before God our prayers for the world. We pray for the leaders meeting at the G7 summit. We pray for our government both local and national.

We pray for those who are in need. We bring before you all those we know of. You know their need Lord before we speak it. We pray for our friends and our families, for our churches and communities.

We ask all these prayers in Jesus name. **Amen**

And a final Hymn StF 667 I don't know the set tune, but it can be sung to Kingsfold (I heard the voice of Jesus say).

1. *O watcher in the wilderness,
O Lord of bush and flame,
you meet us when we least expect and summon us by name.
From our routine we turn aside
to see your wonders here;
you bid us stand on holy ground, and overcome our fear.*
2. *O Friend and Master, Jesus Christ,
in whose great name we meet,
you take the basin and the towel and kneel to wash our feet.
You call upon us by this sign,
as we've been served, to serve;
then send us out to do God's work, to give without reserve.*
3. *O Guide and comfort, Holy God,
among your people now,
you speak to us, and urge us grow, and gifts and grace endow.
Unblock our ears, unlock our hearts,
truly to hear your word;
and strengthen, Lord, each onward step, to live as we have heard.
Dominic Grant (b. 1970)*

Blessing. May God bless us in this coming week. **CCLI 644362**