

RYDE BAPTIST CHURCH SUNDAY SERVICE

17 May 2020

what is heard, and the message goes in one ear and out the other. People who are preoccupied or distracted with other thoughts, or who are sceptical will not readily receive God's Word.

Some people are like the rocky soil. (vv.5, 16-17) There is an initial response to the Word, but it does not take root due to shallowness of heart. Charles Spurgeon once remarked that some people appear to have been baptised in "boiling water", requiring constant, superficial excitement to remain in the faith. When trouble or persecution comes, such people will leave quickly. Suffering has no place in their theology. They are fair-weather Christians.

Others are like the thorny ground. (vv.7, 18-19) They respond to the message of the gospel, but are overcome by worries, greed, and worldly desires that choke their spiritual life and prevent them from bearing spiritual fruit. They are not willing to give up the world to gain Christ.

It is the good soil that represents true disciples. (vv.8, 20) They accept God's Word and produce a rich harvest. Unlike the others, they are willing to really listen, to suffer, and to give up everything for Christ. (Luke 14:33)"

Application. The danger in hearing this parable is to think that it is referring to a once-and-for-all response to God's Word, for example when we first make

a commitment to become a Christian. However, we need to ask ourselves how we are responding to God's Word on a daily basis. We all need to re-assess our own Christian walk and discipleship bearing in mind the teaching here of the four soils. How do we hear and respond to God's Word? Sometimes we will find all the different soils in our own hearts and our response to God's Word may vary based on different areas of our life. May we all have the courage to respond like the seed sown in the good soil.

SUGGESTED SONG

All To Jesus I Surrender
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SW8EA7DEQ2M>

BLESSING

Go forth into the world in peace;
Be of good courage;
Hold fast that which is good;
Render to no one evil for evil;
Strengthen the faint-hearted;
Support the weak;
Help the afflicted;
Honour all people;
Love and serve the Lord,
Rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.
And the blessing of God Almighty,
The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
Be upon you and remain with you for ever. Amen.

<https://rydebaptist.xyz>

Dear Friends,

It wasn't that long ago, just back in early March, that on Sundays we were thinking about our frontlines using the excellent Frontline Sunday resources provided by LICC. We considered how fewer than 6% of people in the UK go to church once a month or more. We thought about how that feels like a small number when we are gathered together, but were challenged by the fact that once scattered out into the world in which we live what a huge influence we might have, and just how many people we really might connect with during the week on our frontlines.

Well, what a difference just two months makes. The world seems very different now. We haven't been able to gather together in person on Sundays since 22 March, and we have been challenged to bring into our daily lives all that we were talking, thinking and praying about just before lockdown. We really are scattered, not just in theory (remember the pictures of the red dots?) but in practice. The 6% of us now have to work and witness, live and give glory to God from our homes out in the community. This is proving to be easier for some than others, but is very much possible.

This makes our Gospel reading this morning all the more powerful. I have been busy planting seeds which are merrily growing away on the kitchen windowsill, and I have just purchased some more to plant now that the garden centres are back open. We have to be making a difference, sowing the seeds of love and the good news of Jesus, into the lives of the people we are in contact with—our families, neighbours, strangers in the 2 meter queues, the colleagues and service providers we come into contact with each day. That is our scattered mission.

However, this seed, sower and sowing metaphor isn't just about other people and what we can do for them. We also have to think seriously about how well the seed is germinating, being nurtured, growing and bearing fruit in our lives, on an ongoing daily basis. The power of the sowing seed is that it doesn't just talk about our mission to go into all the world, which we will look at again next week, but also about our discipleship and how we grow in our relationship with Christ and each other as his church.

Thursday this week, 21 May, is Ascension Day, when we commemorate the return of the Lord Jesus to his heavenly

home. So, in addition to our Sunday morning Zoom Fellowship Meeting at 10.30am today, and our Monday Prayer Meeting tomorrow at 7.00pm, we will celebrate Ascension Day at 7.00pm with a special Zoom meeting when we will focus our worship on the Ascended Christ and the Mission he has given us to share the Good News with all people. If you are able to join us, you will be really very welcome.

We are grateful to Ian Pratt for choosing the songs this morning and for preparing the mini-sermon outline. If you are reading this sheet on your computer or device don't forget that you can click on the readings and songs; and for additional links and resources, updated regularly, please go to our Sunday Supplement website at <https://rydebaptist.xyz>

CALL TO WORSHIP

⁶ Remember this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously...¹⁰ Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.
(2 Corinthians 9:6,10)

BIBLE READINGS

[Mark 4:1-20](#)

[2 Corinthians 9:6-15](#)

SUGGESTED SONG

I Love You Lord (and I Lift My Voice)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKF7sBxv1-o>

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we thank and praise you for this new day in which to worship and serve you. We thank you for the gift of life, for its many twists and turns, its many experiences, which continue during the very different time through which we are living. We thank you for your love and faithfulness, and that our hope and our trust are in you and you alone. Give us strength when we feel weak, patience when we feel frustrated, comfort when we feel isolated or alone. Help us to see our lives as part of your great purpose for this world, the chapters of our individual stories as part of your great story of love and salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. May we see growth and fruit in our lives as we seek to put into practice all that you teach us day by day; and may we see that fruitfulness as we sow the seeds of your kingdom through each moment of each day—for Jesus' sake. Amen.

SUGGESTED SONGS

Hallelujah—Aleluya
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0Ke8p93QRk>

Holy, Holy, Holy
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AgHrNNM23p8>

MINI-SERMON OUTLINE

Introduction. If you were to ask me which season is my favourite, I would have to say spring. Spring follows winter and what I particularly like about it is the newness and freshness of the flowers, trees, butterflies, etc. I am sure we all love to see the first daffodils or to see the first butterfly after the cold, dark, and often wet days of Winter.

During lockdown Sally and I have been walking from home through Appley Park to Appley beach and then back home. We have enjoyed seeing the trees gradually bursting into leaf. Appley Park has a wonderful collection of trees, particularly mighty oak trees, and has been a previous recipient of the Greenflag Award. It was the parkland which was originally part of the grounds of St John's House, and its landscaping was believed to have been carried out by Humphry Repton in 1798 for Edward Simeon. (Humphry Repton was the last great English landscape designer of the 18th century, often regarded as the successor to Capability Brown.)

During lockdown many people have been busy in their gardens planting trees or shrubs, planting seeds, mowing the lawn and weeding the flower beds. Sally recently planted some old seeds of rocket and lettuce in a large trough. The rocket germinated very quickly but two different sorts of lettuce seed just disap-

peared. It was very frustrating for her, as the second sowing of lettuce appeared to be growing and then disappeared, eaten by birds or slugs possibly.

That is why today's reading is quite appropriate – the parable of the sower.

Exposition. (With thanks to Our Daily Bread Ministries)

Jesus lived in a rural agricultural community which would have understood how seeds were sown by hand and how things grew. Someone has said this parable should be renamed the parable of the four soils, as Jesus talks about how the seed sown responds to four different kinds of soil.

Why does the hearing of God's Word produce such different responses in a congregation? Some folk are just bored and others really excited by it.

It is so easy for a congregation to pass judgment on the preaching and then to blame the preacher, but here the preacher turns the tables and holds up a mirror to the congregation!

The seed in this parable represents the Word of God. (v.14) The farmer is the preacher and the four soils represent four different kinds of people.

“Some people are like the path: the seed that falls on it is taken away quickly by Satan. (vv.4,15) Such people hear but fail to listen. They do not reflect on