



## Pentecost 6

12 July 2020

For those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit....  
If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

Romans 8:5,11

***We rejoice in God's presence.*** 'Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him'. Sensed on a sunlit day, reflected in a calm lake, God is with us.

***We rejoice in God's presence.*** Sensed in the hug of a child, reflected in the closeness of a couple long-married. God is with us.

***We rejoice in God's presence.*** Sensed in the faith community at prayer, reflected in an unnoticed caring act, God is with us.

***We rejoice in God's presence.*** Sensed in the living words of Jesus the Christ, reflected in those through whom his Spirit moves, God is with us

***' Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him'***

(Romans 8:9)

We are not here to dwell on our own shortcomings but to remember your love for us in Jesus the Christ. We are not here to prove our own faithfulness but to think carefully about how we proclaim the Good News and to reflect on the possibilities before us for wholeness and healing in a challenged and challenging world.

***We are here to remember your love for us in Jesus Christ and to renew our discipleship.***

Hymn 547

*Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,  
naught be all else to me, save that thou art;  
thou my best thought, by day or by night,  
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.*

*Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word;  
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;  
thou my great Father, thy child let me be;  
thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.*

*Be thou my armour, my sword for the fight,  
be thou my dignity, thou my delight;  
thou my soul's shelter and thou my high tower;  
raise thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.*

*Riches I scorn and the world's empty praise,  
thou my inheritance, now and always,  
thou and thou only the first in my heart;  
high King of heaven, my treasure thou art.*

*High King of heaven, after victory won,  
I reach heaven's joys O bright heaven's Sun!  
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall  
still be my vision, O ruler of all.*

## Confession

There is no time, O God, when we come into your presence when we are not aware of our failings and inadequacies, Your holiness, your goodness and your love always lie before us, lived out in the life of Jesus, the ultimate expression of fully realised humanity. As we come again seeking in spirit and in truth, we discover again who we are and who we have failed to be. So we come to explore the deep places within us, the shadows and hidden realities which we would rather not admit. When we act as our own harsh gods refusing to forgive our own failings and judging the failings of others, make us aware of your forgiveness and compassion and love and to share it in better understanding of others and their needs. Remind us that in Jesus genuine humanity broke through artificial piety and embraced real and raw engagement with all people regardless of all the differences that we so often allow as excuses for our lack of compassion and love.

***Yes; there is no condemnation for those who acknowledge your compassion and grace, freely given for all. Thanks be to God.***

## Hymn 693

*'Come as you are: that's how I want you.*

*Come as you are; feel quite at home,  
close to my heart, loved and forgiven.*

*Come as you are: why stand alone?*

*'No need to fear, love sets no limits;  
no need to fear, love never ends;  
don't run away shamed and disheartened,  
rest in my love, trust me again.*

*'I came to call sinners, not just the righteous;  
I came to bring peace, not to condemn  
Each time you fail to live by my promise,  
why do you think I'd love you the less?*

*'Come as you are; that's how I love you;  
come as you are, trust me again.  
Nothing can change the love that I bear you  
all will be well, just come as you are'.*

## Scripture Romans 8:1-11

**There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death**

**For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit**

**To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.**

**You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.**

In this is the word of God for us.

### **A very human encounter**

It may surprise us to learn that Albert Einstein and Charlie Chaplin were good friends. But Yes! They were. When in 1931 Chaplin's classic movie *City lights* was premiered a huge crowd went wild as Einstein and Chaplin arrived together, Chaplin having invited the Nobel Prize winner in Physics as his special guest. As the story goes Chaplin turned to Einstein and remarked, 'They're cheering you because nobody understands you, and me because everyone understands me'.

Hear the Gospel

### **Gospel Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23**

**That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears, let him hear."**

**"Hear then the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."**

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Reflection "He who has ears, let him hear."**

Jesus was certainly a charismatic public figure in his time and one on whose every word his audiences would hang. But how well did they grasp his meaning? Probably this varied greatly. Indeed, the Parable of the Sower may well be a clear recognition on Jesus' part of the mixed reception he was getting in his public ministry. Even his closest followers were often slow to pick up the nuances of his meaning so that he had to spell out his message in

detail to those who should have been grasping his core message given their intimacy with him.

Recently I was reading a book written to introduce non-scientifically trained people to the thinking of Albert Einstein in order to enable them to see how Einstein's scientific thought led him to see in his scientific discoveries an ongoing need for religion and faith in a world where science and technology govern our lives. His was a carefully nuanced way of thinking about the scientific enterprise and beliefs outside the realm of science. Not for him the negative reductionist thought of an atheistic scientist. Einstein had a fascinating 'big picture' perspective of the world and human existence. Personally he wove together science, ethics and religious faith to yield a richer overall account of the reality of everything that matters. As he was to say: 'Science can only ascertain what *is*, but not what *should be*'. Science, ethics and religion are quite different undertakings playing distinct roles in our lives and they are based on different thought patterns. Einstein wasn't just a great scientist; he was also a reflective human being who realised the importance of holding together our key ideas and beliefs such that the 'big picture' of the world and ourselves might help us move beyond the fragmentation of ideas and values that has become such a core feature of Western culture. Surely the Jesus who said "**He who has ears, let him hear**" was one who wanted his followers to go beyond superficial ways of thinking and the correspondingly superficial actions that thus eventuate. None of us is fertile ground for the seeds of life, all the time or in every context. Sometimes we are more open to take the word of God deeply into our lives and our faith practices. At other times we just grab at it and celebrate as though we know it all – like a rock that is impervious to the transforming presence of God. And sometimes the seed simply dies in us because we are too engrossed in the deathly things that distract us on our life journey. But always God is sowing and we are receiving. Then the question is, what kind of soil are we?

**If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.** (Romans 8:11)

**Hymn 636**

*God has spoken to his people, hallelujah!  
And his words are words of wisdom, hallelujah!*

*Open your ears, O Christian people,  
open your ears and hear good news.  
Open your hearts, O royal priesthood,  
God has come to you,  
God has come to you.*

*God has spoken to his people, hallelujah!  
And his words are words of wisdom, hallelujah!*

*They who have ears to hear his message,  
they who have ears, now let them hear;  
they who would learn the way of wisdom,  
let them hear God's word,  
let them hear God's word.*

*God has spoken to his people, hallelujah!  
And his words are words of wisdom, hallelujah!*

### **Prayers for Ourselves and Others**

In Jesus Christ, self-centred ways are at an end, new opportunities are envisioned and the will to bring change for good is found.

***We are people of “the Way”; we will walk boldly with the example of Jesus before us, and the living spirit of Jesus within us.***

Come, sower of the seeds of life and shower the waiting earth with your creative grace. Our faces are lifted in hope and our hearts are opened for the beginnings of new things. Quieten our souls in anticipation. Mature our minds that we may know more of your wisdom.

Deepen our lives that the promise which you offer is not lost to us before it is enabled to reach its fulness.

***We are people of “the Way”; we will walk boldly with the example of Jesus before us, and the living spirit of Jesus within us.***

We know, O Christ our Lord, that the signs of your fruitfulness in us are in the life which we share with others; in the blossoming of justice, the greening of compassion and the spreading of true peace. We pray that the riches of your Spirit will flourish in the world in which we live everyday.

***We are people of “the Way”; we will walk boldly with the example of Jesus before us, and the living spirit of Jesus within us.***

Softener our hearts like good earth, O God, and send the gentle rain of your love to join with all that we bring to this moment. Break open the rocks of superficial joy that we may be more true to your wholeness and, if our lives seem like barren ground, come to us and enliven us again, sower of the seeds of life eternal.

***We are people of “the Way”; we will walk boldly with the example of Jesus before us, and the living spirit of Jesus within us.***

### **Hymn 561**

*Who would true valour see,  
let them come hither;  
those here will constant be,  
come wind, come weather.  
There's no discouragement  
shall make them once relent  
each from a vowed intent  
to be a pilgrim.*

*Those who beset them round  
with dismal stories  
cannot the brave confound:  
their strength the more is.  
No lion can them fright,  
they'll with a giant fight,  
but each will have a right  
to be a pilgrim.*

*Hobgoblin nor foul fiend  
can daunt their spirit:  
they know they at the end  
shall life inherit.  
Then fancies fly away;  
they'll scorn what people say,  
and each work night and day  
to be a pilgrim.*

**Benediction**

May the life of God be cherished in us,  
the hope of Christ be revealed in us  
and the Holy Spirit gently tend each vulnerable sign of newness.  
**Amen**

**Reverend Graeme Kerr**