

if Christ (or the Spirit) is in you, though you may be a corpse because of all the wrong you have done, you are actually very much alive – because of the Spirit. If God's Spirit is in you, God will resuscitate your bodies (from being corpses) through the Spirit, in raising you to new life at the end of time.

Matthew 13:1-9,18-23 - The crowd that has come to hear Jesus is so large that he teaches from a boat on the Sea of Galilee. He tells several parables; the first one (vv. 3b-8) he explains in vv. 18-23, but only partially. People were familiar with Palestinian farming; sometimes seeding preceded ploughing. The "sower" (v. 3) and the seed are constant; where it lands varies: in three unfruitful places ("on the path", v. 4, among rocks, v. 5, "among thorns", v. 7) and in one fruitful place (v. 8). V. 9 tells us (and the crowd) that this is a story with a deeper meaning. People naturally thought of the sower as God and the various soils as the people of the world; knowing the prophecy of the fate of Jeroboam's household in 1 Kings, they probably linked "birds" (v. 4) with evil. Perhaps here the sower is anyone who tells the good news. Growth represents receptivity. While Jesus has invited listening (v. 9), understanding (vv. 19, 23) is required in order to be fruitful: reflect on Jesus' message. Those who brush off the message are seduced by evil (v. 19). Vv. 20-21 also speak of lack of understanding: of superficiality, of reflecting insufficiently to withstand "persecution". Discipleship is demanding. Then v. 22: following Christ requires undivided loyalty, single-mindedness. Finally v. 23: only those who adequately reflect (thus coming to understanding), who meet the demands of the faith, and who are truly dedicated are fruitful and bring others to Christ. © 1996-2020 Chris Haslam

Resumption of Services - A number of precautions are in place due to Covid 19 and we accept that this will mean some inconvenience and changes to our normal routine. Rather than worry people, we hope that these measures will reassure you that we are taking the anti-virus advice very seriously in order to ensure that our churches are as welcoming and safe as possible. The first few services will use a shorter liturgy with music but without hymns and Communion will also resume soon.

Prayers - Prayers are said daily for the welfare of our community, our nation and the world. If you have any particular issue that you would like to be prayed for, do please email me on frkevinobrien@me.com or call me on 065 672 4721.

Online services - Please note that these are to continue each Sunday, in addition to the regular meditations during the week on Facebook. During this time away our website has significantly developed so please do scroll down to explore the new sections and information. There are six new sections:

- Worship - a number of videos of services
- Pray - leaflets and resources on ways of praying
- Explore - videos of some inspiring speakers
- Think Question Believe - a parish podcast
- Viewpoint - videos on the basics of Christianity
- Rector's Blog - articles, thoughts, opinions

Select Vestry - Easter Vestries are now to be held between mid-August and the end of September - elected Select Vestry members remain in post until a new meeting is convened.

Rector: Email: frkevinobrien@me.com Tel: 065 672 4721

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5th Sunday after Trinity (Year A)

Readings and Hymns

Collect

O Lord, we beseech you mercifully to receive the prayers of your people who call upon you, and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil them; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Suggested Hymns - For the online service you might like to view these hymns with lyrics on YouTube.

- 1) We plough the fields and scatter
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ha628Pj_Rns
- 2) Eternal Father strong to save
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Vta4ct64gq>
- 3) Come down, O Love divine
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=flvKDGktutl>
- 4) O Love that will not let me go
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s3OJ-V9U_Y8

Isaiah 55:10-13

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,
and do not return there until they have watered the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.
For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace;
the mountains and the hills before you
shall burst into song,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;
instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle;
and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial,
for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Psalms 65

Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion; ♦
to you that answer prayer shall vows be paid.
To you shall all flesh come to confess their sins; ♦
when our misdeeds prevail against us,
you will purge them away.
Happy are they whom you choose
and draw to your courts to dwell there. ♦
We shall be satisfied with the blessings of your house,
even of your holy temple.
With wonders you will answer us in your righteousness,
O God of our salvation, ♦
O hope of all the ends of the earth
and of the farthest seas.
In your strength you set fast the mountains ♦
and are girded about with might.
You still the raging of the seas, ♦
the roaring of their waves
and the clamour of the peoples.
Those who dwell at the ends of the earth
tremble at your marvels; ♦
the gates of the morning and evening sing your praise.
You visit the earth and water it; ♦
you make it very plenteous.

The river of God is full of water; ♦
 you prepare grain for your people,
 for so you provide for the earth.
 You drench the furrows and smooth out the ridges; ♦
 you soften the ground with showers
 and bless its increase.
 You crown the year with your goodness, ♦
 and your paths overflow with plenty.
 May the pastures of the wilderness flow with goodness ♦
 and the hills be girded with joy.
 May the meadows be clothed with flocks of sheep ♦
 and the valleys stand so thick with corn
 that they shall laugh and sing.

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 in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of 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 to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the just 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 this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since 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, though 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 from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

Matthew 13: 1-9, 18-23

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: 'Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, 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 brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears* listen!' '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 is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on 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 such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately 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 lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.'

Commentary

Isaiah 55:1-9 - This chapter concludes a section of the book called Second Isaiah by many scholars. It was written during the Exile, after the fall of Babylon to the Persians. This

section began with Chapter 40, and key themes presented there are repeated here: the way of the Lord, calling the people to enjoy God's gifts, a new deliverance, the word of the Lord, the king, heaven and earth, God's relationship with Israel, forgiveness, and the participation of other nations. Vv. 1-3 invite all who thirst for God (even the impoverished) to join in his freely-given banquet at the end of time. The meal symbolizes God's love, his abundance. Recall other banquets: in Egypt, after a plague killed every first-born son but passed over (did not afflict) Israelite sons; and after Moses received the Law on Mount Sinai. Here the banquet is for "everyone". The food is both invaluable ("without price") and cannot be bought ("without money"). God made an "everlasting covenant" (v. 3) with David, making him a great leader and guaranteeing him an enduring line of successors; now this greatness is transferred to Israel ("you"), so that they "may live", i.e. see the promises of long ago fulfilled now and in the future. Now nations who neither know Israel nor are known to her will come seeking Israel's "Lord" (v. 5). All may now "seek the Lord" (v. 6), turn humbly to him, not only in the Temple but wherever he may be found, for "he is near". The invitation to share in the life of this new community is even extended to evildoers who repent and "return to the Lord" (v. 7), for they will be pardoned. God may be "near" but he is transcendent, sufficiently removed not to be contaminated by human sin. His ways are beyond human comprehension (vv. 8-9). Vv. 10-11 say that God's word comes gently from him, to permeate the earth and return to him, mission done. His spirit, infused in humans, brings in them godliness, success in furthering God's plan. Vv. 12-13 say that sin will be abolished; all the world will recognize God; creation will be renewed, and all will rejoice. This will be an "everlasting sign" of God's love.

Psalms 65 - "All flesh" (v. 2), people of all classes, praise God for the harvest. He answers prayers and forgives. Those whom he chooses (v. 4) he brings to worship in the Temple ("your courts", "house"). His "goodness" is his presence there and his gifts, especially rain. He saves us by his actions in the world; all people everywhere hope in him and praise him (vv. 5b, 8b). Vv. 6-8 praise him for his creative act; then he overcame chaos; now he keeps it at bay. Freedom from invasion ("silence ... tumult") makes farming possible. He makes the land fertile (vv. 9-13). The "river of God", the reservoir ancients thought to lie above the firmament, the giant pudding bowl over the earth, is the source of rain; he provides it for planting "grain" (v. 13). "Pastures" (v. 12) parched by the sun "overflow" with rain; on the hillsides it helps grapes to grow; the wine from them causes "joy". People blessed by his bounty, and all nature, "sing together for joy" (v. 13).

Romans 8:1-11 - Paul has written of the inner conflict which arises within the believer. Whether an adherent to the Law or a Christian, one wills to follow God's ways, but somehow one does otherwise. Something within one causes one not to follow through from "mind" (v. 6) to action. One's body, one's "flesh", seems naturally inclined to do evil. Paul has thanked God for rescuing us from this state: for we who are incorporated "in Christ Jesus" (v. 1) there are no dire consequences ("condemnation") of our mistakes. Why? Because God's "Spirit" (v. 2), in the new way of being, has freed us from the finality of physical death. God has overcome our inclination to sin by lovingly "sending his own Son" (v. 3): he who suffered the effects of human sin in order to do away with it through rising again, thus enabling us to attain oneness with God (v. 4). There are two mindsets (vv. 5-6): one self-oriented and the other Spirit-oriented, one leading to the finality of "death", and one to spiritual "life". Self-orientation is inherently in opposition to God (v. 7). But Christians are motivated by the Spirit (dwells, v. 9), belong to God. "Spirit" and "Christ" come together. Vv. 10-11 say: