



The Sunday Supplement

Issue 19: 25th July 2020

Call to Worship

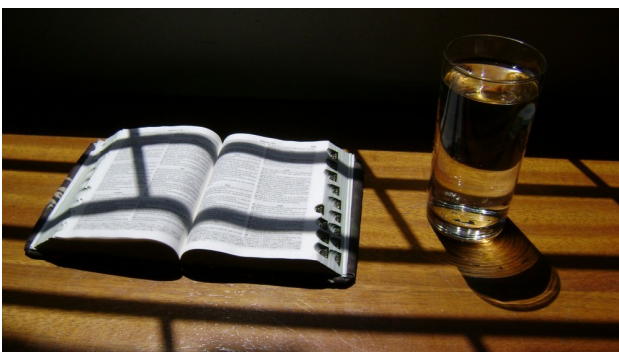
Here, in this place,
God welcomes all the dreamers, as well as the doubters:
here, the worriers and wanderers can call on God by name.
Here, in this time, we can remember all the ways God has graced us:
here, in these moments, we are reminded that God is with us, always!
Here are gathered those daring enough to step out of comfort into the unknown:
here, in this faith space, we will find the courage to cry out, 'God, save us!'
in every situation.

Thom Shuman

Prayer

O God,
Jesus taught that where our treasure is,
there will our hearts be also.
In this hour, we come bringing our treasures -
all that we have and all that we are.
We come seeking your treasure -
treasure that does not fade, decay, or disappoint.
Share with us the treasure of heaven,
that we may boldly share it with others. Amen.

Barb Hedges-Goettl



Reading

Matthew 13: 13:31-34 & 44-52



Prayer - Teach me your ways

Teach me Your ways, Lord,
that I may come down from my heights
and be open to the same Spirit
who moved over the face of the waters in
the first day of creation
and moves also over the chaos of this
time
to fashion a day like this,
a world like ours,
a life like mine,
a kingdom acting as leaven in the bread
of earth.

And make me aware of the miracles of
life,
of warm and cold,
of starkness and order,
of screaming wind and impenetrable
silences,
and of the unfathomable mystery of
amazing grace
in which I am kept.

Teach me Your ways, Lord,
that I may praise You
for all the surprising, ingenious ways You
bless me,
and for all the wondrous gifts You give
me,
along with all the pain and joy I sustain.

Teach me Your ways, Lord,
that I may accept my own talent openly,
nurture it hopefully,
develop it faithfully,
and give it freely.

Teach me Your ways, Lord,
that I may love Your kindness
and practice it toward the hungry of the
world,
the poor and sick, and oppressed,
that I may learn the healing humility that
comes from You.

Teach me Your ways, Lord,
so that my heart is flooded with Your
mercy—
emptying it of what makes it firmly
opposed to Your ways,
so that it beats more in rhythm with You
and pounds greatly for Your kingdom.
Amen.

Ted Loder

Thought for the week



What matters most? For months the answer to that question has been shaped by COVID-19. Across the world governments have taken action to halt the spread of the coronavirus. Saving lives and protecting healthcare systems has been the highest priority. Life and health were what mattered most.

This summer, as July turns to August, other priorities are emerging or perhaps being rediscovered. Restrictions on social and cultural activities have been eased. Things aren't quite as they were before but slowly individuals are able to resume those activities that are most important to them. Businesses are restarting and furloughed workers are returning to their jobs. For the government, economic recovery is now the priority. For individuals and families, increased possibilities for social contact perhaps matters more.

What matters most, asks Jesus? The short parables in Matthew's gospel gives his answer. What matters most is the kingdom of God. Like a tiny seed or yeast mixed into dough, the kingdom begins in a small way. Like fine pearls or hidden treasure, the kingdom is of great worth. Those who find the treasure and allow the seed to take root in their lives are part of the kingdom. The precious and life changing kingdom is what matters most in this world.

As young boys, Rodrigo and Gleison, began collecting bricks to build a house. They knew that building a decent home would change their lives. One day they realised that something else mattered more than their own security and comfort. The two young men willingly gave all they had to build a church so that the kingdom of God might grow in Porto Velho.

Churches are beginning to reopen around Britain. After weeks of worshipping online and gathering on Zoom many local Christian communities will come together again this summer. Congregations will probably be small. Services will be shorter as recommendations and restrictions are still part of the picture. The parables of the mustard seed and the yeast teach us that this is not a problem. The kingdom of God starts small and grows steadily.

What matters most? Each of us must answer that question for ourselves. Our lives and our health are important. Social connection and economic security are significant factors for our wellbeing. As Christians we believe that a relationship with God through Jesus enriches and sustains us through good times and bad.

Through the parables of the kingdom, Jesus offers an answer that we might well carry with us in the coming days. What matters most? The kingdom of God. From small beginnings this great treasure is the single most precious thing. It changes our lives and, through us, could change our world.

Great is Thy Faithfulness

(William M. Runyan / Thomas O Chisholm / Eric Allyn Schrotenboer)

"Great is Thy faithfulness, " O God my
Father,
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they
fail not
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

*"Great is Thy faithfulness!" "Great is Thy
faithfulness!"*

*Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided -
"Great is Thy faithfulness, " Lord, unto me!*

Summer and winter, and springtime and
harvest,
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to
guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for
tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Steve Jenkins chose "Great is Thy Faithfulness" for this week's Sunday Supplement.

I have chosen 'Great Is Thy Faithfulness' which for me 'presses all the right buttons' - great words and a very melodic tune. I am very much a traditionalist and love hearing the organ play well-worn hymns that get the blood stirring. As well as liking the composition and technical aspects of the hymn, it means a lot to me as it was one of two hymns Karon and I had at our wedding. We are both so thankful for all God's blessings as we share this wonderful life together.

Blessing

Brothers and sisters,
Never doubt the love of God!
For long before you were aware of it,
God knew you.
He had already chosen you to be part of his family -
a child of God!
And having chosen you, he called you;
and having called you, he made you right with God;
and having made you right with God, he gave you his glory!
So do not doubt the love of God.
For if God is with us, we have nothing to fear. **Amen.**

Christine Longhurst

