

Sunday 14th June 2020

Call to worship

Loving Lord, your grace draws us to your presence; your peace unites us in your love; your hope inspires us to praise your glory. May our worship be worthy of you. Amen.

MP 395 Judge eternal

Prayer and Lord's Prayer

We come before you, gracious God, just as we are. We come with our weaknesses and our vulnerabilities. We come with our fears and apprehensions. We come with faith and doubt.

We come to offer and receive. We come to you, the king of love –in the name of your Son, and in the power of your Spirit. Lord, you have called us to the privilege of service, but we have failed to serve. You have given us the blessing of peace, but we have chosen discord.

You have loved as a shepherd tends his sheep, but we have strayed from your way. Forgive us, and show us the path of obedience and faithfulness that your Son walked. We unite with the whole world in praising you, creator God. We come before you with gladness and thanksgiving. We praise your goodness; we praise your faithfulness; we praise your tenderness. We are yours and we worship you. We bless your name for ever.

Amen.

Let us come together in the words that Jesus taught us. Our Fathe...r

All age. Happy Father's Day to you! I want you to imagine you are in the church this morning. I want you to say to one other person in the church "Happy Father's Day". Doesn't matter who it is. Now just as we sometimes greet each other by shaking hands I would like you to do this by wishing each other Happy Father's Day. --- Now "I would like everyone in the congregation who heard the words 'Happy Father's Day' from another person here today to raise a hand." Wow! Look at all those hands go up. We began by telling Just One person yet all these people heard it in such a short time? That is good news. Jesus wanted the good news of his kingdom to be told to the whole world. How can just one person or just a small group of people tell the whole world? IMPOSSIBLE! And yet it happens when we tell just one person at a time -- like we did here today. This is how God tells the whole world about the good news of Jesus. One person tells another how much Jesus loves them and before you know it -- EVERYBODY KNOWS IT! Dear God: Help us tell the good news to others so that everyone can know this good news. Amen.

MP Hymn No 541 One shall tell another.

Intercession Prayer.

In long summer evenings when light lingers and sunsets have time to deepen from light pink to deep red, we offer You our thanks and praise. We remember and hold before You people in your world where the fading of the light brings not only darkness, but sadness and discomfort. May they know Your light. When we gather and share food and laughter with friends, and family, we offer You our thanks and praise. We remember and hold before You those who today will share meals tainted with sadness, those who through no choice of their own eat alone, those who are hungry and have little food. May they soon know joy and plenty. When we have been offered hospitality that was generous or unexpected – we have been blessed and we offer thanks and praise. We remember and hold before You refugees and those who are strangers in a foreign land, those for whom exceptional warmth and hospitality would mean so much. May they know a rich welcome and ongoing support. Dear God, we thank you for our world and all that fills it. We thank you for all we can do to make your world a better place. Help us to care for the world around us for the people of today and the generations of tomorrow. May our words, our actions and our thoughts change this world and change the lives of those around us and around the globe for the better. Ever creating, ever loving, ever encouraging God, we offer You our deep thanks. Use our gifts, talents and skills in the world so that our lives may tell out Your praise and where possible, aid those whom we have remembered before You today. Hear our prayers, through Jesus Christ our loving Saviour. Amen

Matthew 9.35-10.8

Sermon

When Jesus lived with us here on earth, he had so much work on his hands. He wanted the whole world to know about his good news. To him it was like a harvest that had come. When it is time to harvest, it must be done the right away! Jesus wanted the whole world to know about the good news he came to tell. He wanted the world to know right away! He said it was like a harvest waiting to be picked. Have you ever looked out on a golden grain field in the summertime? I love seeing the fields weaving around as the breezes blow around them. Spears of grain, standing straight, reaching out toward the sky, ready for some useful purpose.

That's what Jesus sees here. He sees men, women and children of every age and nation who make up this field. These people are the most important fruit of the earth. Someone is eventually going to reap this harvest. To put it in the simplest terms, people are going to be won for good or evil. So, at home and abroad, and within the church itself, we are on God's mission. In the imagery of our text here, we are called to be labourers in God's harvest. Jesus then is challenging us here when, first of all, he reminds us that the harvest truly is great; secondly, he reminds us of the

obstacles in meeting this challenge when he tells us that the labourers are few; and finally he gives us the answer to the challenge when he says, "Pray you therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into the harvest." Today, then, let us talk about THE CHALLENGE OF GOD'S HARVEST.

The opening words of Jesus here are just as true today as they ever were. "The harvest truly is great!" The major challenge to the Church today lies in the fact that more than ever before people are in need to hear a spiritual word. That's the way in which "the harvest is truly great" - people's hearts are "set up" as never before to hear a healing word from God. During the last several years there has been a phase of disillusionment. We looked to technology for pleasure and comfort, and somehow thought we could reap the rewards of personal security and inner contentment as well.

The phase is over, today our social system is at such loose ends that many people openly talk about the breakdown of our society as we know it. These are days that get us down. One wonders what the world is coming to next. Many people are so confused, that they are ready to throw in the towel and just simply exist. People feel shackled by life. They listen to the voice of their own insecure heart which says, don't look, you might see. Don't listen, you might hear. Don't think, you might learn. Don't make a decision, you might be wrong. Don't walk, you might stumble. Don't run, you might fall. Don't live, you might die.

In such a context we may say that the time for hearing God's healing, encouraging message has never been better. And in addition to this the harvest is also great when we consider the large number of young people today. Young people, as always, are looking for a star to which they may hitch their wagons. They will latch onto that promise which appears most inviting. So many young people, tired of life already at twenty-one. They've seen it all, they've experienced it all, but we are called to be God's harvesters. Every Christian is called to share the good news of the Gospel, the news that brings hope and new life and a new outlook. Let's not get the idea that we merely want to lure more people into the church though. Christianity is not a monument. It is a movement. It is because it has a moving message - that is, a message that is able to move people, so that they begin to have meaningful, creative lives again. God once moved to love us and to make us his own. In a sense Jesus Christ is the only labourer in this harvest. He alone could do it. He alone has made it possible for our sins to be forgiven. He alone went the ugly way of the cross, loving us to the end as he suffered and died for us there. He alone has demonstrated the amazing love of God so that our eyes are opened and we call God our Father. Is there anyone among us here who does not need to hear that message? Is there anyone here not ready for such good news? Everyone - and all of us - wait for God's good Word in Christ. Truly the harvest is great!

The easiest thing in the world is to agree with Jesus that the harvest is great. The saddest thing in the world is that the labourers are so few - when there might be so many. As Christians we sometimes find it difficult to live and pass the message of God's love to all people. But Jesus gives us an answer to the challenge of the harvest. He says finally, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would

send forth labourers into the harvest." To pray is to be committed to God's will and way. When we pray we are asking God to give us the zeal, faith and consecration to be one of the labourers ourselves. As we pray let us say "Here I am, Lord, send me!

MP Hymn No.229 Here I Am Wholly Available

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Benediction

Go to serve; go to love; go to bring healing; go to bring peace; go in the strength of the Father go in the power of Jesus; go united by the Spirit. Go – and know his grace. Amen.