



Worship for Sunday 19th July 2020 **Living Alongside!**



I have sent out a variety of services and prayers over the past few months and today I thought you might like to choose one that particularly helped you to worship God, and to use that one. *(They are all available on the website.)* You can then add in today's Collect and Reflection, here below.

You will see from the Gospel reading this week that we hear again Jesus' message about 'The wheat and the weeds (*tares in other translations*)' and how the two grow alongside each other.

My brain goes immediately to how we now live alongside this 'weed' that is the coronavirus – we must live alongside it for a while, but it need not hinder our faith in Jesus, or stop us growing in the Lord. We can trust that our God will bring us to the day of resurrection when all 'weeds' will be gone and we will be in the peace and presence of our Lord forever. *(Amen)*

We have begun this week to prepare the church for Sunday services – marking out places to sit at a safe distance. We have also ordered the necessary protective elements – hand sanitizer and masks – although you can provide your own for comfort if you prefer. We will need to mark out the pathway to ensure that we keep the distance as we enter and leave – we are planning to start our services at 10.30am to begin with to give everyone time to get in at a safe distance and sanitize their hands on entry. The exact details will be sent out soon.

Work on the car park extension has begun!

And so, let's begin our worship... Every blessing Carol x

Light a candle or simply have a quiet moment to prepare for worship....choose a service that enables you to come to God in worship.

The Collect

Gracious God, you call us to fullness of life:
deliver us from unbelief and banish our anxieties
with the liberating love of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Reflection: Romans 8:12-25 & Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

This week as we hear Paul again talk, in the book of Romans, about sin; and we also hear Jesus give the parable of the wheat and the weeds, it appears that in this life there will be two elements living alongside – and we can't do anything about that. Whilst we live the life of the Spirit of God, follow the teachings of Jesus, and give ourselves daily to God, we will still have to live with the presence of sin amongst us. Just as, 'Whilst we share in Christ's glory, we (*unfortunately*) must also share his suffering.' (verse 17)

Also, even within the church of God whilst there will be a good and wholesome crop growing, there is also, alongside, weeds 'planted' amongst the people of God. We can't do anything about this, Jesus is saying we will always have this, but we simply trust that the angels of God will sort it all out at the end of the world.

Two things living alongside each other sin & Spirit – wheat & weeds! Even though we have the Spirit we groan whilst we wait for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We can choose the ways of the Spirit, strengthened by God, and we are not obliged to do what the sinful nature 'urges' us to do (verse 12). But that sinful nature is still there urging us! I'm reading a book called

'Switch on Your Brain' by Dr Caroline Leaf that says there is now evidence to show how the choices we make in life actually change the shape of our brains and even our DNA! We may be 'urged' by sin in the world to go against the love of God – but, we don't have to!

We need a closeness to the Spirit to enable us to resist these urges. But the urges will remain just as the weeds remain amongst the wheat of a good crop. Jesus says we can't pull the weeds out because that will simply cause too much damage, and it's not our job to do – we are left with the challenge of the two existing alongside each other until Jesus comes for the crop of real wheat.

If you're a gardener, you'll know that very often weeds grow alongside plants that they look very similar to. You have to be really careful whilst trying to pull the weeds out because you might actually be pulling the plant itself out as well. If the plant were actually food that you were dependant on, you couldn't risk pulling the weeds out.

It is believed that the weed/tare Jesus was using as an example for this parable, was the darnel which is a poisonous ryegrass – it's actually an intoxicant to humans. It is very difficult to tell which is the wheat and which is the darnel until close to the time for harvest. (See picture below) So, the darnel simply had to be left amongst the wheat until the last minute.

It seems obvious (to me) to make a connection to our current situation with the coronavirus - we must have a life alongside the threat of the virus. Ok – it wouldn't be damaging for us to pull the virus out, or would it? Have we listened for the changes we need to make to our own lifestyles, to create a better world for the poor, the refugee, farmed animals, the environment and the air we breath(?) Sometimes opposites simply live alongside for a time – and sometimes for a good purpose.

Below is a worship song – led by an inspiring young man who lives both with disability and gifting – his disability doesn't stop God at work in and through him. Let him lead you in worship:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NjYeUN2zWqI> (*Words in the box below*)

This is Christopher's story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=StKfxLA2BKk>

God's amazing grace has been with Christopher even in the midst of a terrible start in life, he has an amazing gift alongside his disabilities. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mXYTHbS3-RU>

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord
Open the eyes of my heart
I want to see You
I want to see You (*repeat*)

To see You high and lifted up
Shinin' in the light of Your glory
Pour out Your power and love
As we sing holy, holy, holy

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord
Open the eyes of my heart
I want to see You
I want to see You (*repeat*)

To see You high and lifted up
Shinin' in the light of Your glory
Pour out Your power and love
As we sing holy, holy, holy



Nature has
an amazing
way of
showing us
how to live,
love and
grow
alongside
each other