



Chet Valley Churches

All Together Worship

Trinity 6

Weeds

19th July 2020

Introduction

Good morning and welcome to the Chet Valley. Our service this morning is All Together Worship on this the sixth Sunday of Trinity. Some of our churches are now open for worship, and we will be following this service in All Saints Chedgrave today starting at 11:00am. Welcome, whether you are with us in the church or are joining us online.

We Prepare for Worship

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you

Our service today is looking at things that grow in the soil, good or bad; the plants that we want and the weeds which are uninvited.

🎵 **Hymn 249: Great is Thy Faithfulness**

“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.

“Great is Thy faithfulness...”

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!

“Great is Thy faithfulness...”

Let us pray:



The Collect for Purity—A Prayer of Preparation

**Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open, all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden,
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit
that we may perfectly love you
and worthily magnify your holy name
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Collect—A Special Prayer for the Day

Creator God,
You made us all in your image:
May we discern you in all that we see,
And serve you in all that we do;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Confession—We Say Sorry to God

As we become aware of God's presence with us, we realise that we fall short of the kingdom living that he calls us to.

Our lives have become choked up with weeds and we are not growing and flourishing as we should.

A minister introduces a time of penitence.

Jesus says, 'Repent for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand'. So let us turn away from sin and turn to the Lord, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

Then all say together

**Father God
We ask you to forgive us
For the things we have thought
And the things we have said
And the things we have done
That do not please you.
We are sorry.**

i'M Sorry
Forgive Me Please



**Help us to be more like Jesus:
Ready to pray, ready to help others,
Ready to do your will
In all things, every day. Amen.**

Absolution—The Minister Announces God's Forgiveness

May the God of love and power
forgive *us* and free *us* from our sins
heal and strengthen *us* by his Spirit,
and raise *us* to new life in Christ our Lord.
Amen.

We praise God in the words of the Gloria:

♪♪ Peruvian Gloria

Glory to God, Glory to God, Glory to the Father
Glory to God, Glory to God, Glory to the Father
To him be glory for ever **To him be glory for ever**
Alleluia Amen. **Alleluia amen.** x2

Glory to God, Glory to God, Son of the Father
Glory to God, Glory to God, Son of the Father
To him be glory for ever **To him be glory for ever**
Alleluia Amen. **Alleluia amen.** x2

Glory to God, Glory to God, Glory to the Spirit
Glory to God, Glory to God, Glory to the Spirit
To him be glory for ever **To him be glory for ever**
Alleluia Amen. **Alleluia amen.** x2

📖 Bible Reading: Matthew 13: 24-30; 36-43

Jesus told another story: “God’s kingdom is like a farmer who planted good seed in his field. That night, while his hired men were asleep, his enemy sowed thistles all through the wheat and slipped away before dawn.

When the first green shoots appeared and the grain began to form, the thistles showed up, too. The farmhands came to the farmer and said,

‘Master, that was clean seed you planted, wasn’t it? Where did these thistles come from?’ He answered, ‘Some enemy did this.’ The farmhands

asked, ‘Should we weed out the thistles?’ He said, ‘No, if you weed the thistles, you’ll pull up the wheat, too. Let them grow together until harvest time. Then I’ll instruct the harvesters to pull up the thistles and tie them in bundles for the fire, then gather the wheat and put it in the barn.’”

Jesus dismissed the congregation and went into the house.

His disciples came in and said, “Explain to us that story of the thistles in the field.” So he explained.

“The farmer who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, the good seeds are the children of the kingdom. The thistles are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the Devil. The harvest is the end of the age, the curtain of history. The harvest hands are angels.

“The picture of thistles pulled up and burned is a scene from the final act. The Son of Man will send his angels, weed out the thistles from his kingdom, pitch them in the trash, and be done with them. They are going to complain to high heaven, but nobody is going to listen.

“At the same time, ripe, holy lives will mature and adorn the kingdom of their Father. Are you listening to this? Really listening?”

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Talk [Rev Alison]

Last week we heard the parable of the sower and I was wondering which words we should be sowing.

My soundbite gospel was: “God made you, God loves you and God wants you to flourish”.

Today we have heard about the weeds growing up amongst the good plants—impossible to remove them without taking out the good plants too.

Weeds are good at flourishing. Just think of those thistles! They produce masses of seeds—thistledown—light and easily blown about by the wind to grow wherever they touch down. They are tough with sharp prickles and they grow quickly, competing with the plants we want, the good plants in the soil. Nasty invasive weeds!

We are the children of God, made in His image and loved by him; made to flourish wherever we find ourselves in this world. According to Jesus, that means we are like the good plants in the soil.

I wonder whether we are flourishing and growing.

I wonder if something is preventing us from flourishing.

I wonder what nasty invasive weeds are taking over our lives and stopping us from doing the good things that we know would build up God's kingdom.

Some weeds may be out of our control: the pandemic; money worries as the economy stalls; the irritations of everyday life, like spending half an hour in a phone queue for an unproductive phone call when you're supposed to be writing this sermon!

Some are due to the poor choices that we make, alcohol; gambling; over-busyness...

Some are voices that we choose to hear, whether from friends; teachers; acquaintances; social media...

We cannot always change the circumstances in which we find ourselves but, in theory at least, we can change the way we deal with them. I was eventually able to let go of my phone frustration, for instance.

Sometimes, though, this seems impossible, perhaps as a result of the weeds being more deeply rooted:

- *You're a stupid child;*
- *You are too old to be of any value now;*
- *You will never amount to anything.*

I wonder how easy it would be to get rid of those weeds or how we might live with them and continue to thrive.

By taking them to God, perhaps? Or talking it through with people we trust? Or seeking professional help?

Another definition of a weed is simply a plant that grows where it is not wanted. This becomes trickier. In my vegetable patch we grow all sorts of different crops and harvest them in due course. One of the things we like to grow are potatoes—new potatoes, fresh out of the ground, boiled with

a knob of butter on the top; delicious! Trouble is, when they are harvested, often a little one is left behind in the ground having fallen off the stem as it is lifted. This ‘keeper’ remains in the ground and grows the following year – usually in a row of something quite different. This year we have had potatoes coming up amongst the beans and carrots; quite unwanted and outgrowing the seedlings that we have been carefully tending. So, they are weeds.

Potatoes are weeds? Surely not! Well, yes and no.

Potatoes are weeds when they are growing in the wrong place, and are good seed when they are growing where they are supposed to be growing on the vegetable patch.

“God made you, God loves you and God wants you to flourish”.

I am sure that God wants each of us to flourish.

As I said, weeds are good at flourishing.

Does that mean that God wants us to be weeds?

Of course not!

God does not want us to be weeds choking off the good plants. In other words, God does not want us to flourish at the expense of others.

I want to be free to go shopping without having to wear a mask because I find them claustrophobic and my glasses steam up but...

What do you think?

I want to be able to say whatever I’m thinking but...

What do you think?

I want those who are poorer than me to flourish but...

What do you think?

I want to have clean air and an end to pollution but...

What do you think?

I am wondering then, are you, am I, good seed? Do we bear fruit and a good yield? Are we loving and forgiving and just?

Or are you, am I, a weed? Do we prevent the flourishing of others by the bad choices we make?

Going back to those thistles; those nasty invasive weeds... Thistles are great for wildlife. They produce copious pollen and nectar for lots of different insects. Their seeds are food for birds like the goldfinch. Their leaves are eaten by butterfly larvae. Their thistledown is used to line birds' nests.

So are they good seed or bad?

Are we good seed or bad?

Who is to judge? You? Me? Fortunately, not—it's not up to us to label anyone. When it comes to the crunch it will be Jesus who makes the decision. How will *you* fare?

🎵 **Hymn: For the Fruits of His Creation**

For the fruits of His creation, thanks be to God;
For the gifts of every nation, thanks be to God;
For the ploughing, sowing, reaping,
Silent growth while men are sleeping,
Future needs in earth's safe-keeping,
Thanks be to God.

In the just reward of labour, God's will is done;
In the help we give our neighbour, God's will is done;
In our world-wide task of caring
For the hungry and despairing,
In the harvests we are sharing,
God's will is done.

For the harvests of the Spirit, thanks be to God;
For the good we all inherit, thanks be to God;
For the wonders that astound us,
For the truths that still confound us,
Most of all that love has found us,
Thanks be to God.



Creed: We Say What We Believe

The minister introduces the creed

**We believe in God the Father,
From whom every family
In heaven and earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,
Who lives in our hearts through faith,
And fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
Who strengthens us
With power from above.**

**We believe in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**



We Pray Together

Plants need all sorts of things to flourish. We will be using these to guide our prayers today.

Water

We pray for people in those places where they do not have access to clean water and sanitation. They cannot wash their hands to help prevent the spread of Covid-19. They cannot clean surfaces to remove traces of the virus...

Loving God, we pray that they may flourish

Sunlight

We pray for people who find themselves in places which seem dark and difficult: warzones, refugee camps, the bedside of someone who is dying...

Loving God, we pray that they may flourish

Strong Root System

We pray for people whose 'roots' have been pulled away from the soil: those who find themselves without homes, without jobs, without familial support...

Loving God, we pray that they may flourish

Space to Grow

We pray for people who are being treated unfairly: those persecuted because they are different, those abused by people in power...

Loving God, we pray that they may flourish

We draw all our prayers together in the words that Jesus taught us.

Our Father in heaven,

Hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come, your will be done,

On Earth as in Heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

As we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation

But deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory

Are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

Notices

Outdoor cake and produce sale on Saturday 8th August from 10:00-14:00 at All Saints, Chedgrave.

Picnic lunches will be available if ordered in advance from Rev Alison (01508 528126)—eat on one of the benches in the churchyard or in The Pits playground.



Most of us are all too quick to label others as weeds or good plants; yet all are present in the field and all are to be left for the end of the age when it will be Jesus who will attend to the sorting. Until then, his invitation remains: all are welcome.

🎵 Hymn: All Are Welcome

Let us build a house where love can dwell
And all can safely live,
A place where saints and children tell
How hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,
Rock of faith and vault of grace;
Here the love of Christ shall end divisions;

*All are welcome, all are welcome,
All are welcome in this place.*

Let us build a house where prophets speak,
And words are strong and true,
Where all God's children dare to seek
To dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness
And a symbol of God's grace;
Here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:

*All are welcome, all are welcome,
All are welcome in this place.*

Let us build a house where love is found
In water, wine and wheat:
A banquet hall on holy ground,
Where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus,
Is revealed in time and space;
As we share in Christ the feast that frees us:

*All are welcome, all are welcome,
All are welcome in this place.*



Blessing

May the blessing of God, Father Son and Holy Spirit be upon you
and those whom you love, now and forever more. **Amen.**

The Dismissal

Go in peace to love, follow, and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

