

# Sunday 21st June 2020

## Call to worship

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Let us pray:

Gracious God, you have brought us to the beginning of a new week. Your hand is upon us to care for and protect us. We offer you our lives and our hearts. May we always do your will and love our neighbour as ourselves. Amen

## Confession

Merciful God, we are sorry for our unfaithfulness to the love you show us by the gift of life and the greater gift of union with you through the grace of baptism. Lord, we beg you to forgive our sins and to heal the wounds that our sins have caused. We thank you, Lord, for your mercy that brought us to repent and for the forgiveness that you offer so freely when we truly repent.

(Silence)

## Assurance of Pardon

The almighty and merciful Lord grant you pardon and remission of all your sins.

God of love, give us a heart to love you and to love one another; through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, our Saviour.

Amen

**Hymn:** [You are my hiding place](#)

## New Testament Reading:

### The Gospel of Matthew 6:25-34

<sup>25</sup> 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? <sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? <sup>27</sup> And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? <sup>28</sup> And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they

neither toil nor spin, <sup>29</sup> yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? <sup>31</sup> Therefore do not worry, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear?” <sup>32</sup> For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. <sup>33</sup> But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

<sup>34</sup> ‘So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.

*This is the word of the Lord*

## **Reflection**

This is probably one of the most difficult passages to apply to our lives in our modern, Western world. This passage is not about living a carefree life without responsibilities. This passage is about faith. It is about how much do we trust God and if we place our trust more in our abilities and the world around us, or in our Creator, the One who made us and the world we live in. In fact, the word that Jesus uses here for “worry” is the opposite of “trust”.

Continuing from the previous verses, Jesus is still referring to our attitude to material needs and possessions, and is inviting us to accept that those who trust in God can rely on Him the same way as a child can rely on their parents to provide for their needs. The issue that it raises in our modern minds is that, often some feel that the “religious ideal” is not considering the harsh reality of our society. But we must consider seriously the following points:

As mentioned before, the word that Jesus uses for “worry” is the exact opposite of “trust/faith”, the practical trust in God in the everyday situations.

Our worrying about tomorrow is caused by our current social and economic structures, not on the world as God intended it to be. But sensible provision about the future and worrying are not the same thing. The New Testament encourages us to make

provisions for the future and look after our loved ones and condemns those who do not (1 Timothy 5:8).

The problem is our attitude with regards to how we respond to major economic disasters or drastic changes to our lifestyle. This is where we need to apply our faith. This passage does not condemn the actions of providing for the future but condemns the state of mind where one panics, worries about the future and put their trust in themselves rather than God.

When we closely link this passage with the previous verses regarding our attitude to possessions, we can see how this faith or lack of, is applied in everyday life.

Those whose priorities are on earthly possessions will take a course of action that can often stray onto immoral ways in order to obtain or maintain a certain lifestyle. The sin of not trusting God opens the door to many other potential sins that spring up from our perception of ourselves in the world and the importance we give to things like status, power, material possessions and other worldly things. You can see that we are falling in the original sin again and from that we walk into selfishness, idolatry and more.

Those whose priorities are on heavenly treasures, first of all is our relationship with God, will live lives in a manner that even though they lose everything, they are still thanking God for the little they have. Their lives and identities are not determined by the possessions they have, but are based on their relationship with God.

Try to imagine yourself in a catastrophe where you lose your job, your house and all the things that make you who you are in our society. Then ask yourself who you are. Ask God who you are. Then reflect on the answers.

This passage is about trusting God, not our pension fund, not our property, not our savings. It's about trusting God and placing Him in the centre of our heart. It's about checking with Him, not the bank, before we buy something. It's about asking Him for advice before we take any decision or any course of action. It is about having in the heart the words of Psalm 23 "...even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me..."

Amen

## **The Lord's prayer**

At the Saviour's command and formed by His divine teaching we pray together:

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen**

## **Benediction:**

The blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be with you always. Amen

Rev. Bruno Boldrini