

## Summer Musings

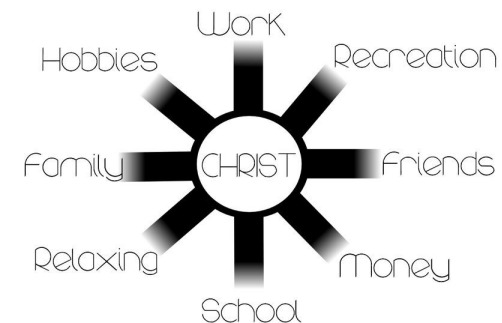
A lot of our readings throughout Trinity this year encourage us to consider our response and responsibility in faith. You and I have to work out for ourselves the difference between responding to God's outrageous and unconditional love ~ which we accept as a free gift from Him and trying to work to gain or keep that gift as if we are fearful it will be snatched away from us if we don't spend our time doing things for God while telling Him and ourselves that we are doing His work! The two main dangers are that we either overstretch ourselves or don't do anything in response to that love. The key is to place Christ in the centre of all you do, how you live your life and how others see you live it!

We have to give up saying things like ~ "I have to put my family first" in a way that means we pay no attention to God. If Christ is in the centre of all we do and we have been blessed with a family ~ they will naturally 'come first' in terms of not being neglected by us because they are given to us by God and we have a responsibility for all we are given.

During the summer give it a go ~ rethink your routine so that you know Christ is in the centre ~ at least say good morning and good night to Him (that is the start of praying) and then add in some thank you's and requests and even the occasional apology (confession) knowing that you will be forgiven!

Note what difference it makes to you ~

### Knowing Jesus and making Him known



do not even realise that we are behaving as weeds unless someone points it out to us!

- ◆ We know that the Sowers servants~ the angels ~ are watching and that the Sower ~ God wants us to survive so we are equipped with the example of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit to recognise and repent of the weeds that try to spring from our nature. That when we repent we are forgiven and when we are forgiven we can continue to grow.
- ◆ We also know that to grow we need to be nurtured and nourished. When we are born ~ older people, usually our parents learn how to care and provide for us, to show us how to behave and grow healthy. They teach us ways to grow as good seeds, but they also, at times, teach us how to be weed-like and we have to learn, from scripture and through prayer, to recognise all that we learn for what it really is.
- ◆ We learn that as faithful and good seed we will still have weeds around us ~ so in real terms if a family member is not faithful we don't have to abandon them or be separated for us to continue to grow, we just have to recognise that they may be a distraction or hindrance in our journey of faith and make sure that we do not allow that to happen! Hold them in prayer and ask the Spirit to turn their hearts~ they are the Sowers and the servants responsibility not ours!

Our responsibility is to grow strong, faithful and true ~ to develop into the disciples that the Sower planted us to be by learning more of Him and how to come close to Him, through His word, prayer and sharing with others. By learning to recognise the weeds around and within us and keeping them at bay. So I asked at the beginning of this sermon what are the weeds in your life?

Take a moment to ask the Spirit to reveal them to you ~ and then if any one of you feels able to share a weed revealed to you ~ please come and do so ~ what you can share may help someone else here recognise a weed in their life and be encouraged to deal with it. Then, together, we can continue "Knowing Jesus~ making Him known"

Isaiah 44: 6-8

OT page 683

Romans 8:12-25

NT page 153

Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43

NT page 14

(23rd July 2017 ~ sermon notes)

What are the weeds in your life?

The parable of the Sower shows us that each of us is planted or created by God in this world to flourish and be whole individuals ~ but He knows that there will be lots of challenges to face before we are full grown! In the parable these are called the weeds. In the parable the weeds are the work of the enemy ~ the devil and the everyday temptations of the world that he provides.

But look at what the Sower tells His servants to do when they report that all the weeds, or challenges, are surrounding the good seed that He has sown ~

The sower tells the servants that this is the work of the enemy but doesn't tell the servants to go and pull up all the weeds because if they were to do that they might damage or destroy some of the good seed that has been planted; instead he says let them grow together until the harvest time. Then the Sower will instruct the harvesters to first gather all the weeds and tie them in bundles ready for burning and then gather the wheat and place it safely inside His barns.

You and I, who walk in faith, are the good seed that will become the wheat given a safe place in the kingdom of Heaven at the end of time. But the parable tells us that we will be surrounded by weeds ~ those people who not only do not walk with Jesus but actively work to deny Him, God the creator and the Holy Spirit. Jesus tells His disciples that the harvester's are the angels ~ who will weed out of His Kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will be destroyed for all their bad works ~ everything that prevents God's children being in relationship with Him! When this is done the faithful, the good seed grown to wheat, will shine like the sun in the in the Kingdom of their Father.

What does that tell u?

- ◆ It tells us that we are promised a place in the father's Kingdom!
- ◆ It tells us that we need to grow ~ that we do not just remain as the seeds that the sower plants. Notice in the parable those seeds sprout and form heads ~ as humans we are born and start to think and discover ~ we discover faith and own it for ourselves.
- ◆ It tells us that when we start to develop and walk in faith the weeds, the distractions will also grow up alongside us! They will not be removed! We will grow side by side.

Surely that tells us that we have to be alert ~ we have to give some time and effort to make sure that we are weed free ~that there are no tendrils winding around us and taking such a hold that they bind us.

If you garden ~ you will know all about 'creeping Jenny'! Before you know it, almost heart shaped, leaves are growing amongst the cultivated plants. They produce pretty, delicate white bell-shaped flowers ~ and then you see that they are bound round your beautiful plants slowly trying to strangle them and so intertwined that if you try to weed them out you risk damaging and destroying the plants that you want to enjoy! You can pull some away but the roots and tendrils remain and they need keeping in check.

What else can we learn from this parable?

- ◆ We know that as human beings we have the freedom to choose to be faithful or not. God desires that we will faithful ~ that it what He created us for ~ to be the good seed, but because we are enquiring, because we want to know everything we can behave as weeds ~ greedily looking to our own wants and desires regardless of how it damages or destroys those around us.
- ◆ We know that our weed like nature can be very deceptive ~ just like the 'creeping Jenny' it can look as if it is good and innocent when it isn't at all! ~ Worse it can deceive us so we