

***Eighth Sunday After Pentecost (26<sup>th</sup> July, 2020)***

**Pastor Peter Ghalayini**

**M:** Every student of the scriptures who becomes a disciple of the Kingdom

**All:** **is like someone who brings out new and old treasures from the storeroom.**

**M:** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C:** **Amen.**

**Opening Hymn – Lord Of Creation** *TIS 626*

- 1. Lord of creation, to you be all praise!  
Most mighty your working,  
most wondrous your ways!  
Your glory and might are  
beyond us to tell,  
and yet in the heart of the  
humble you dwell.**
- 2. Lord of all power, I give you my will,  
in joyful obedience your tasks to fulfil.  
Your bondage is freedom;  
your service is song;  
and, held in your keeping,  
my weakness is strong.**
- 3. Lord of all wisdom, I give you my mind:  
rich truth that surpasses  
man's knowledge to find,  
what eye has not seen and  
what ear has not heard  
is taught by your Spirit and  
shines from your word.**
- 4. Lord of all bounty, I give you my heart:  
I praise and adore you for all you impart,  
your love to inspire me,  
your counsel to guide,  
your presence to cheer me,  
whatever betide.**

**5. Lord of all being, I give you my all;  
if ever I leave you I stumble and fall;  
but sworn in glad service  
your word to obey,  
I'll walk in your freedom  
to the end of the way.**

*Music: Irish traditional melody.  
Harm. From Erik Reginald Routley 1917-82;  
Words: Jack Copley Winslow 1882-1974 alt.,  
Words © Mrs J Tyrell; Oxford University Press*

*M:* If God is for us, who is against us?  
So let us confess our sins to God our Father and ask him in the name of our  
Lord Jesus Christ to forgive us;

*C:* **We confess to you, almighty God,  
before the whole company of heaven, and to each other,  
that we have sinned in thought, word and deed, by our own fault.  
Have mercy on us, for Jesus' sake, forgive us all our sins,  
and bring us to eternal life.  
Amen.**

*M:* As a called and ordained servant of the Word I announce the grace of God to  
all of you. On behalf of my Lord Jesus Christ, and by his command, I forgive  
you all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy  
Spirit.

*C:* **Amen.**

*L:* When your word goes forth it gives light;  
Lord have mercy,

*C:* **Lord have mercy,**

*L:* it gives understanding to the simple,  
Christ have mercy,

*C:* **Christ have mercy.**

*L:* Turn to me in mercy,  
Lord have mercy,

*C:* **Lord have mercy.**

*M:* The Lord be with you,

*C:* **And also with you.**

**M:** Let us pray that we may find peace in knowing God.  
Almighty and merciful God,  
you have made us for yourself,  
and our hearts are restless  
until they find their rest in you.  
Teach us to seek you  
and to rely on you in all our needs,  
so that our deepest desires may be satisfied,  
and we may finally see you face to face.  
We ask this through your Son,  
Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns  
with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

### **First Reading – 1 Kings 3:5-12**

#### *Solomon's prayer for wisdom*

<sup>5</sup> At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, 'Ask for whatever you want me to give you.' <sup>6</sup> Solomon answered, 'You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day. <sup>7</sup> 'Now, Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. <sup>8</sup> Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. <sup>9</sup> So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?' <sup>10</sup> The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. <sup>11</sup> So God said to him, 'Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, <sup>12</sup> I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be.

**R:** This is the Word of the Lord.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm 119:129-136** (*Spoken responsively*)

*M:* <sup>129</sup>Your statutes are wonderful;  
therefore I obey them.

*All:* <sup>130</sup>**The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.**

*M:* <sup>131</sup>I open my mouth and pant,

*All:* **longing for your commands.**

*M:* <sup>132</sup>Turn to me and have mercy on me,

*All:* **as you always do to those who love your name.**

*M:* <sup>133</sup>Direct my footsteps according to your word;

*All:* **let no sin rule over me.**

*M:* <sup>134</sup>Redeem me from human oppression,

*All:* **that I may obey your precepts.**

*M:* <sup>135</sup>Make your face shine on your servant  
and teach me your decrees.

*All:* <sup>136</sup>**Streams of tears flow from my eyes,  
for your law is not obeyed.**

## **Second Reading – Romans 8:26-39**

### *Nothing can separate us from the love of God*

<sup>26</sup>In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. <sup>27</sup>And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. <sup>28</sup>And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup>For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. <sup>30</sup>And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. <sup>31</sup>What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup>He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? <sup>33</sup>Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup>Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. <sup>35</sup>Who shall

separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? <sup>36</sup> As it is written:

‘For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’ <sup>37</sup> No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, <sup>39</sup> neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

*R:* This is the Word of the Lord.

*All:* **Thanks be to God.**

*L:* Alleluia, alleluia.

I will open my mouth to speak in parables;

*All:* **I will proclaim what has been hidden from the foundation of the world.**

**Alleluia.**

### **Gospel Reading – Matthew 13:31-33,44-52**

*(Spoken)* **Glory to you, O Lord,**

*Parables of the kingdom*

<sup>31</sup> Jesus told them another parable: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. <sup>32</sup> Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.’ <sup>33</sup> He told them still another parable: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about thirty kilograms of flour until it worked all through the dough.’ <sup>44</sup> ‘The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. <sup>45</sup> ‘Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. <sup>46</sup> When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it. <sup>47</sup> ‘Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. <sup>48</sup> When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. <sup>49</sup> This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous <sup>50</sup> and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. <sup>51</sup> ‘Have you understood all these things?’ Jesus asked. ‘Yes,’ they replied. <sup>52</sup> He said to them, ‘Therefore every

teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.'

**L:** This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** *(Spoken)* **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Lord Jesus,  
thank you for revealing the kingdom of God to us.  
Keep us in your kingdom and help us to treasure it.  
Amen.**

**Hymn – God Is Love**

*LH 394*

- 1. God is love: let heaven adore Him;  
God is love: let earth rejoice;  
Let creation sing before Him,  
And exalt Him with one voice.  
He who laid the earth's foundation,  
He who spread the heavens above,  
He who breathes through all creation,  
He is love, eternal love.**
- 2. God is love: and he enfoldeth  
All the world in one embrace;  
With unfailing grasp He holdeth  
Every child of every race.  
And when human hearts are breaking  
Under sorrow's iron rod,  
All the sorrow, all the aching,  
Wrings with pain the heart of God.**
- 3. God is love: and though with blindness  
Sin afflicts the souls of men,  
God's eternal loving-kindness  
Holds and guides them even then.  
Sin and death and hell shall never  
O'er us final triumph gain;  
God is love, so love for ever  
O'er the universe must reign.**

*Music: C.V. Taylor 1907- (1941);  
Words: Timothy Rees (1874-1939), alt.  
In the public domain*

**Sermon**

*All:* I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth.  
And in Jesus Christ,  
his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the  
Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, dead, and buried.  
He descended into hell.  
The third day he rose again  
from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and sits at the right hand of God,  
the Father almighty,  
from thence he will come to judge  
the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy Christian church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.

Amen.

#### Offering Hymn – God Who Made The Earth And Heaven

1. God, who made the earth and heaven,  
Darkness and light:  
You the day for work have given,  
For rest the night.  
May your angel guards defend us,  
Slumber sweet your mercy send us,  
Holy dreams and hopes attend us,  
All through the night.
2. And when morn again shall call us  
To run life's way,  
May we still whate'er befall us,  
Your will obey.  
From the pow'r of evil hide us,  
In the narrow pathway guide us,

**Never be your smile denied us  
All through the day.**

**3. Guard us waking, guard us sleeping,  
And, when we die,  
May we in your mighty keeping  
All peaceful lie.  
When the last dread call shall wake us,  
Then, O Lord, do not forsake us,  
But to reign in glory take us  
With you on high.**

**4. Holy Father, throned in heaven,  
All holy Son,  
Holy Spirit freely given,  
Blest Three in One:  
Grant us grace we now implore you,  
Till we lay our crowns before you  
And in worthier strains adore you  
While ages run.**

*In Public Domain*

*L:* Thank you, Lord,  
for giving us so many wonderful gifts,  
especially for calling us into your kingdom.  
Make us faithful and wise servants,  
giving of what you have given us  
to help others.

**All: Amen.**

## **Prayer of the church**

### **Lord's Prayer**

*All:* **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 forever.  
Amen.**

*M:* Go in peace to live as faithful and wise members of God's kingdom.

*All:* **Thanks be to God.**

*M:* The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make his face shine on you  
and be gracious to you.  
The Lord look upon you with favour,  
† and give you peace.

*All:* **Amen.**

**Closing Hymn – Yours Is The Glory. LHS 770**

**1. Thine be the glory,  
Risen, conquering Son;  
Endless is the victory,  
Thou o'er death hast won;  
Angels in bright raiment  
Rolled the stone away,  
Kept the folded grave clothes  
Where Thy body lay.**

*Thine be the glory,  
Risen conquering Son,  
Endless is the victory,  
Thou o'er death hast won.*

**2. Lo! Jesus meets us,  
Risen from the tomb;  
Lovingly He greets us,  
Scatters fear and gloom;  
Let the church with gladness,  
Hymns of triumph sing;  
For her Lord now liveth,  
Death hath lost its sting.**

***Thine be the glory,  
Risen conquering Son,  
Endless is the victory,  
Thou o'er death hast won.***

- 3. No more we doubt Thee,  
Glorious Prince of life;  
Life is naught without Thee;  
Aid us in our strife;  
Make us more than conquerors,  
Through Thy deathless love:  
Lead us in Thy triumph  
To Thy home above.**

***Thine be the glory,  
Risen conquering Son,  
Endless is the victory,  
Thou o'er death hast won.***

*Music: George Fredrick Handel (1685-1759)*

*Words: Edmond Luis Budry 1854-1932*

*Tr. Richard Birch Hoyle 1875-1939, alt. In Public Domain.*

**Sermon 26<sup>th</sup> July 2020 – 8<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
Text: Matthew 13:31-33,44-52 – The Kingdom of Heaven.  
By Pastor Peter Ghalayini**

Jesus tells 5 small parables today to describe the Kingdom of Heaven. They each complement each other and also describe a different aspect of God's Kingdom which we're going to explore today.

"The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed - the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

We look at the enormity of the problems that face us and the world – and we look at our resources – our members – our finances – and it is easy to give up. To switch from mission and ministry to maintenance. Instead of looking outward and how we can make an impact in the world we look at our assets and wonder how can we stay open another couple years.

We stop looking for ways to connect with our community and we look for ways to cut costs and look after ourselves. But Jesus shows us today that faith is about reaching out to others for the Kingdom of heaven with even the very little we might have. Size doesn't matter. Jesus teaches us that faith is about reaching out – like a mustard tree – which doesn't worry about how small its seed was but stretches out its branches to help other people. So that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches. This is what we

are here for. We are not a club that exists for our own interests but to share the Good News of the Kingdom of Heaven.

So, he told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.” What Jesus is highlighting here is that what we do can have amazing results for the Kingdom of Heaven. A few weeks ago Jesus said if anyone gives a cup of cold water that it has significant results.

Greeting someone with a smile. Welcoming a newcomer to church. Remembering someone’s name. Inviting someone over for meal. These are little gestures but just as only a small amount of yeast can have great results in making bread – the lack of yeast in making bread changes the complete outcome. But the opposite of that is also true. A harsh word to someone at church. Neglecting a visitor or even a regular who hasn’t been to church for a while can see that small unintended neglect work like yeast in their life.

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. This is an interesting parable. A person finds a treasure – hides it – and then buys the field where he hid it. To me it sounds a little bit like my early days as a Christian. I grew up in a family that did not go to church.

When I began to search for the meaning of life and read my Gideon’s Bible that I received in High School, I rang the local Lutheran Churches. I chose Box Hill because they had evening services which meant I could go to a friend’s place in the afternoon and then straight to church without my parents wondering where I was. I was embarrassed and worried I would get teased so I hid my treasure that I had found. If I had gone out for a morning service they might have asked where I was going. I was a little bit afraid of telling them and my work colleagues about going to church. But when I discovered my relationship with God I wanted everyone to know. Even though I hid my treasure at first I then was prepared to give up everything for the faith I had discovered. I did lose friends – I grew distant from my family – and eventually I gave up my successful career to go back to study to become a Pastor. We also need to support those who are new to the faith because they might not be receiving the support from their family and friends and like the Parable of the Sower recently they could find themselves quickly being choked by the persecution and ridicule of those around them. A visitor or an enquirer who leaves our church without anyone welcoming them or talking to them – who finds our ways of worship strange and confusing – may depart and leave their treasure hidden. We may become their new family and friends and we need to ensure we provide them with that support.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. This parable is similar to the last parable but without the initial hiding of the treasure.

But note the subtle difference: This person didn’t find the treasure, he was looking for it. That difference is easy to miss.

This person is searching for answers in life, just like I was. We live in a society where more and more people are searching for spiritual awakening but sadly they are not coming through our church doors. So many people are saying “I am spiritual but I’m not religious”. Or, I know there’s more to life but I don’t know what it is. Somewhere along the timeline the church lost being the place people come to find spiritual answers and “rest in our branches”. Instead of spiritual awakening they have found religious dogma. Instead of finding spiritual freedom they have found religious traditions that have become rigid and even to a point uncaring. We need to again discover our spiritual treasure so that when people searching for spiritual awakenings come to us that they find what they are searching for. If they find a church that is more focused on getting its traditions and doctrine correct rather than caring and sharing the gospel they will move on. That is not to say doctrine isn’t important – it is. Paul said that to Timothy – watch your doctrine closely. But when it causes division and fighting in the church as we have seen in the past 20 years then how can we expect someone seeking spiritual truth to understand.

Let us become a place where like the mustard tree people can come to find rest for their souls in our branches.

And finally: “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Here Jesus points out the stark reality of why we have mission – to reach out to people to bring them into the Kingdom of Heaven. I know that not everybody likes to think about death and judgment but here Jesus tells us what is at stake if we don’t seek to spread the Good News of God’s Kingdom – that people may miss out. Nobody wants that – especially God. Every person is a person created in God’s image. Every person is a person for whom Jesus died. But what we must remember in this is that the churches task is to spread the Good News. Our task is not to judge evil Jesus says that the angels are tasked with coming and separating the evil from the righteous. And this is only at the end of time like the parable of the weeds – let the wheat and weeds grow together or you may pull out the good wheat with the evil weeds. And the reason is that we cannot search the heart in the same way God does.

We judge by what we see and by our own judgments. There are so many things that we disagree with in the world. There are so many things that I disagree with in the world. But judgment belongs to God. Prayer for salvation is what belongs to us. To pray for the world and all people that they may come to a knowledge of God. To pray for the unbeliever not judge them. To pray for repentance of the evil doer not judge them. I don’t know what’s in a person’s heart and what they are going through – the struggles of dealing with an addiction – the guilt and search for repentance from their evil. To judge them may in fact undo the work that God’s Holy Spirit is doing like the wheat and the weeds. Friends we have a priceless treasure that the world is looking for but do they know we have it? Most people don’t know what they are looking for but they know there’s something more to life. Let us value this treasure we have and let it shine so others start to see its glow in us and like a moth to a flame they come to check out what it is we have. As St Peter says – Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.