

## Blairdaff and Chapel of Garioch Parish Church

Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2020

To be able to access the links, go to the bottom of this page and left click on the date. This will download the pdf in a new window, then simply click on the links as indicated.

### Welcome

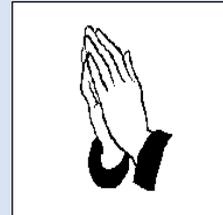
Today is the seventh Sunday after Pentecost.

#### Prayer

Loving God, as we worship you, inspire our prayer,  
help us to pray to you in faith,  
to sing your praise with thankfulness,  
and to listen to your word with eagerness.

Fill us with your Holy Spirit that may we feel the joy of your presence with us.  
What we say with our lips may we believe in our hearts and live out in our lives so  
that your kingdom will grow and your name glorified.

We pray through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.



**Song:** [Let everything that has breath praise the Lord](#) **Click on the link**

#### Prayer of Praise, Confession, Assurance of Forgiveness and Lord's Prayer

Almighty God, praise honour and glory be to you our heavenly Father.  
We acknowledge you to be the Lord, creator of all that exists, the source of  
life and love. Father God, how wonderful, how marvellous, you have been  
to children like us.



You created the world by your grace and redeemed it by your mercy. We thank you for the gift  
of life, your guiding hand upon us and your sustaining love within us. We praise you for Jesus,  
your Son, our Lord. We thank you for his teaching, and for his showing us a new and better way  
to live. We thank you that by his sacrifice on the cross and rising to new life our sin is forgiven  
and the gates of heaven are opened to us.

We praise you for the living presence of your Holy Spirit within us.

Praise and glory, honour and power be yours for ever and ever.

You are a bountiful God who sows extravagantly in our lives, showering blessings upon us;  
so, we ask you forgiveness for our ingratitude, and our spiritual blindness preventing us from  
appreciating the wonder that is this world, and

the endless cycle of nature, of life and death and rebirth.  
Forgive us for taking without giving, and reaping without sowing.

Your love sees failings and forgives.  
Your love feels pain and wipes away our tears.  
Your love knows grief and comforts the sorrowful.  
Your love sees sin and still loves the sinner.  
Forgive us when we fail to live lives that reflect your love.  
Forgive us the many times when we take for granted all that you have done for us.  
Transform us, through your Spirit, and empower us to serve you, today and every day  
Open our eyes to see, our lips to praise, our hands to share.  
May our feet tread lightly on the earth and our footsteps be worthy of following,  
for they lead to you.

*(The prayer of confession is © John Birch, 2016)*

We thank you for your promise that when we confess our sin you forgive us. Merciful Father, heal, renew and restore us that we may be worthy to stand before you, that we may be worthy of the name 'children of God'.

We pray in the name of Jesus, your Son, our Lord, using the prayer he gave us that unites us with Christians around the world;

Our Father, in heaven, holy is your name. Your Kingdom come your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread and forgive us our sin as we forgive those who sin against us and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For yours is the Kingdom the power and the glory for ever. Amen.

### **A Prayer for this time of Coronavirus**

Loving God we thank you that here in the UK the number of deaths from COVID-19 continues to fall. We thank you that we can begin to go about our usual business, albeit with great care.

We thank you for the care of others that has brought us to this point. Help us not to be care-less and destroy all we have achieved that we may prevent on-going misery.

Guide the leaders of nations as they continue to struggle to keep the number of deaths low.

Be with those seeking vaccines; may their work be fruitful so that we might be able to protect one another.

Help us not forget our neighbours, those who live close, those in the wider community, and neighbours across the world; people vulnerable in one way or another. May they know they are loved through our actions and care, and may they know your presence, healing, and peace. Amen.



## Bible Passage

Our Bible passage is Matthew's account of Jesus' parable of the wheat and the weeds. It's another parable that Jesus explains.

### Matthew 13:24-30 & 36-43

<sup>24</sup> Jesus put before them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; <sup>25</sup>but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. <sup>26</sup>So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. <sup>27</sup>And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, "Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?" <sup>28</sup>He answered, "An enemy has done this." The slaves said to him, "Then do you want us to go and gather them?" <sup>29</sup>But he replied, "No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. <sup>30</sup>Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn." '

<sup>36</sup> Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, 'Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.' <sup>37</sup>He answered, 'The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; <sup>38</sup>the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, <sup>39</sup>and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. <sup>40</sup>Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. <sup>41</sup>The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, <sup>42</sup>and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. <sup>43</sup>Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!

## The Parable of the wheat and the weeds

There is nothing like warm, wet weather for making weeds grow. Weeds can be really frustrating to a gardener because the task of weeding is never finished.

If you were a farmer growing wheat and someone deliberately sowed weed in your field you'd be livid.

The weeds, or tares, spoken about in this parable are *lolium temulentum*, bearded darnel. In the early stages of growth, it looks exactly like wheat until the ears appear, then it's quite easy to detect, but not so easy to remove since their roots entwine around the roots of the wheat. Pulling out the weeds would result in pulling out good wheat.

The grain of the bearded darnel is slightly poisonous, narcotic, causing dizziness and sickness with an unpleasant bitter taste; clearly, not something the farmer would want mixed-in with his grain. Usually it would be harvested with the wheat and after threshing, when the bad grain is easy to detect, due to its grey colour, it's handpicked to remove it. Deliberately sowing darnel in a person's field was clearly a very nasty thing to do, and punishable by Roman law.

Just as it is difficult to determine wheat from darnel, so it is difficult to distinguish between God's faithful people and those who are not. We all do things unworthy of the name 'children of God'. Those who deny Jesus might still be celebrated for their good charitable work. Was Abraham a child of the evil one for passing off his wife Sarah as his sister, or for trying to murder his son; or was he a child of the Kingdom for keeping faith with God?

Certainly, good and bad, faithful and unfaithful, live side by side. The parable warns us against making judgments. The servants of the man who owned the field wanted to pull up the darnel and burn it. Their speedy response, however, endangered the wheat.

We don't know what is in people's hearts. It is not for us to judge whether a person is a person of faith or not. Indeed, Jesus' Sermon on the Mount taught, "do not judge, or you too will be judged." What the whole of scripture teaches us is to be patient in our assessment of others and to test everything. As John wrote, "don't believe everyone who claims to have the Spirit of God. Test them all to find out if they really do come from God" (1 John 4:1).

We observe all sorts in the world. Those whom we regard as acting in ways contrary to what we believe is God's will seem to escape the consequences. The parable teaches that at the end of the age there will be a judgment, the good seed from the weeds, or the sheep from the goats to quote another parable - a separation of those who are truly faithful to God and those who are not. Only God can make that judgement. Notice, it is the angels that are sent to separate the wheat from the darnel (verse 41) and this happens once the field has been reaped and the harvest gathered.

Certainly, we know there are parts of our lives that are good and parts that are not? But the real question is - what kind of seed am I - wheat or weed? Am I faithful to Christ? Washed in the blood of the lamb? A child of the Kingdom?

There will be a time of judgement, but for God's faithful people this is something to look forward to, not something to be frightened about - unless of course you are darnel! Paul writes, that if we are children of God then we are, "heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17)

receiving the inheritance of everlasting life, a life live at one with God forever. And as Jesus says, “then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” How wonderful is that! God is the Father of his faithful people made righteous, through faith in his Son, Jesus Christ. Their sins not only forgiven but not even remembered, they are made holy, enabled to stand in the presence of God and live an everlasting life at one with him - shining like the sun, reflecting the glory of God. The fate of the dandelion is not so bright.

So, what does this parable tell us about those who are wheat. First, they are the seed sown by the Sower, ‘children of the Kingdom’ to quote verse 43. Our position as God’s children in his Kingdom is due entirely to his initiative. We will shine like the sun. The glory of God will be reflected in us and from us. There is to be a harvest of souls and we will be ‘gathered in’. We belong to God and he will not allow us to be destroyed, but to live forever in his Kingdom of love.

This parable also tells us something about the world and about God’s timing. Until the time of separation, people faithful and unfaithful live side by side together.

We might ask why that is the case. Why does not God do something about people who inflict harm on others, people who kill, maim or destroy, abuse exploit or neglect others? Whilst this parable does not directly provide an answer, like many of the parables Jesus told and many of his actions, it expresses God’s sovereign rule over the world.

However, God’s immediate judgement isn’t quite as straight forward as we might imagine. As we sometimes say, be careful what you wish for. If we want God to act on special occasions or to specific events that seem to us to be crimes against humanity would that not imply God should act against every other unloving, unChrist-like impulse, thought or action we might have. We would not want to live in a world where our every thought word and action was immediately judged and if necessary punished. God is not like that. He’s not a heavenly policeman waiting to zap us every time we step out of line. He is a loving mercy Father who cares for his children like a shepherd cares for his sheep, seeking them out when they are lost. He is prepared to make the necessary sacrifices for our wellbeing.

Today’s parable, just like last week’s parable of the sower, and one we will read next week, is about patience and waiting. The sower waits for the seed to germinate, grow and bear fruit, before the harvesting can begin. It’s frustrating seeing the weeds grow alongside the wheat. Notice the servants of the farmer in the parable, they wanted to go into the field immediately and root out the weeds, but doing so puts the wheat at risk and threatens the size of the harvest.

Many who followed Jesus, were impatient. They couldn’t wait for God’s timing they wanted Israel to become top nation quickly. There were those like some Pharisees who were keen to fight against pagans and against Jews who transgressed the Law. They were eager to act for God, like the servants in the parable. But, Jesus shows us that God’s Kingdom and God himself, isn’t like that.

Sadly, I find I am just like that. I am impatient for God’s Kingdom to be fulfilled – now! I get frustrated that the church often seems to have a time horizon of eternity. Things happen slowly, too slowly. Thankfully, one aspect of the fruit of the Spirit is patience.

Patience is at the heart of this parable. The servants need patience but so does God. God surely doesn't enjoy seeing his wheat field full of darnel. He certainly would not want to destroy good healthy wheat along with the darnel and so he waits until harvest time.

Jesus teaches that bringing-in the Kingdom is not a revolutionary process but a process of growth, like a plant. That's also true for the way we each grow in faith and grow in our relationship with God.

Indeed, God has already put the world right. God did act, swiftly and dramatically, on Good Friday and Easter Day. Now we patiently wait for the full outworking of those events, like people woken by the early morning light and waiting for the full brightness of the noon day sun.

**Song:** Come ye thankful people come by Henry Alford (1810-1871)

Our song is a well-known song usually sung at harvest. You will see that the lyrics are based on the parable of the wheat and weeds. Whilst it is a song for harvest thanksgiving we might reflect that the harvest about which we sing is about the harvest of the good seed which stands for the sons and daughters of the Kingdom. (The link follows the table below.)

<p>1. Come, you thankful people, come,          Raise the song of harvest home!          All is safely gathered in,          Ere the winter storms begin;          God, our Maker, does provide          For our wants to be supplied;          Come to God's own temple, come;          Raise the song of harvest home!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">---</p>	<p>This first verse is a poem of praise for the earthly harvest that sustains our bodies.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">---</p>
<p>2. All the world God's own field,          Bearing fruit his praise to yield;</p> <p>Wheat and tares together sown</p> <p>Unto joy or sorrow grown;</p> <p>First the blade and then the ear,          Then the full corn shall appear;</p> <p>Grant, O harvest Lord, that we          Wholesome grain and pure may be.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">---</p>	<p>Matt: 13:38 "The field is the world"</p> <p>Matt: 13: 38 "The good seed stands for the sons and daughters of the Kingdom."</p> <p>Matt 13:24 &amp; 25 "A man sowed good seed in his field. But while he was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat."</p> <p>Matt 13:30 "First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn."</p> <p>Mark 4:28 "All by itself the soil produces grain-first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head." (Note Alford's reference to a different parable.)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">---</p>

<p>3. For the Lord our <i>God</i> shall come, And shall take the harvest home; From His field shall in that day All offences purge away,</p> <p>Giving angels charge at last In the fire the tares to cast;</p> <p>But the fruitful ears to store In the garner evermore.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">---</p> <p>4. Then, your Church triumphant come, Raise the song of harvest home! All be safely gathered in, Free from sorrow, free from sin, There, forever purified, In God's garner to abide; Come, ten thousand angels, come, Raise the glorious harvest home!</p>	<p>Matt:13:30 "At that time I will tell the harvesters..."</p> <p>Matt:13:39-40 "The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. ... they will weed out of his Kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil."</p> <p>Matt:13:30 "The weeds will be tied into bundles to be burned."</p> <p>Matt 13:30 "They will gather the wheat and bring it into my barn"</p> <p style="text-align: center;">---</p> <p>Verse 4 mirrors verse 1 as a poem of praise and thanksgiving, but this time for the harvest of souls.</p>
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[Come ye thankful people come](#) *Click on the link*

### Prayers of the People for the People

Father God, I am like a field full of wheat and weeds. Help me not to allow the weeds to choke the wheat in my life. Separate the wheat from the weeds in my personality, in my thoughts, words and actions. Destroy my weeds so I can stand before you like a straight ear of corn bearing lots of fruit for your Kingdom and be gathered in with all your heavenly harvest.



Father God, we pray for the church, here in Blairdaff and Chapel of Garioch and across the Presbytery and across our nation. The church is full of wheat and weeds. Help us in living with the weeds not to judge but to see the good in everyone and become daily more Christ-like, less self-centred, more responsive to the needs of those around us, and less bothered about ourselves. Help us never to forget that among the weeds fruitful corn does grow.

Be with all across the Presbytery and the national Church who are seeking to address the challenges we face, keep us true to your word and open to your vision for our future so that we may be effective in producing a bountiful harvest of souls.

Father God as we look out from our parish and across our nation and the world we notice that wheat and weeds grow together, those who are faithful to you and those who reject you and do not follow in your ways.

Father God we pray for those who live with war, violence and political unrest; for the countries of Africa and the Middle East, torn apart by conflict. Be with all who mourn the lost of loved ones and those who have lost homes and livelihoods, limbs or sanity. Be with your faithful people in these places that they may be channels of your love and peace. May they be agents of transformation and change. When the aspirations and desires of humankind conflict may we not turn to war but seek to resolve our differences through the ways of peace.

Father God we pray for the leaders of nations and all with power over others. We are conscious of the inequalities, injustices, abuse and exploitation people face. We seek a new way of trust, respect and dignity for one another, recognising and meeting people's needs

We bring to your care all who go hungry and all who travel miles each day to collect water. We thank you for the dedication and selflessness of those who work in inhospitable places to care, love and bring relief to those in need.

Loving God, we ask your comfort and healing for the sick, those frightened of what tomorrow may bring, people friendless, lonely, or sad. We pray that in your great love you will meet each need and help each one of us to be good neighbours. By our prayer, by our concern, actions, giving, and the choices we make in our everyday lives, may we demonstrate your love remembering that what we do for others we do for you.

And Father we ask your loving care, support and strength for all who mourn the death of loved ones. Grant them peace and turn their tears of sorrow into tears of joy in remembrance of your promise of eternal life, live with you, for all your faithful people.

We pray in the name of Jesus our Lord. Amen.

### **Benediction and Blessing**

God who sows and God who reaps,  
God who allows growth even in the hard places,  
God who waits patiently for the right time,  
send us out now into the fields of your world to plant hope amidst the weeds and seeds of life.  
And may we learn to scatter love wisely till you gather us in once more.



*(Spill the Beans Resource Team ©2014)*

[Blessing](#) **Click on the link**

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One of the consequences of us not being able to worship together is that the church anticipates a fall in income. However, we will continue to incur costs, of insurance etc. There will be little financial saving to our not meeting, yet revenues could be severely hit. Please prayerfully reflect on this and, if you are able, continue to put aside your financial offering so that you can make your contribution for the work of the church when we next meet together. Thank you.

Thank you too if you already give by standing order or by bank transfer, that is much appreciated.

