



**Church at Home 20  
for Abridge  
Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

*'For I am convinced that neither  
death nor life, neither angels nor  
demons, neither the present nor the  
future, nor any powers,*

*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.*

*Romans 8:38-39*

Eugene Peterson describes Sabbath as "a time to receive silence and let it deepen into gratitude" and so on this day of rest, as we all prepare to pray, let us settle into silence and allow thankfulness to take hold. (Eugene Peterson, *Tell It Slant*, p82).

In the silence of this moment, we express our deep gratitude for the "Church at Home". Father, thank you for your beautiful church family gathered here today online or at home. Revive and sanctify us we pray. Make us a house of prayer for all of our churches. Set our hearts on fire again for the good news of Your Gospel. Let us all take a moment to pray for those in our local churches that are finding life particularly tough. (Pause & Pray)

Hymn: [Come Now is Time to Worship](#). [Seek Ye First The Kingdom of God \(V1\)](#)  
[Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God \(V2\)](#) (Sorry about YouTube advert in Middle)

Today's readings are:-

Genesis 29:15-28, Psalm 105:1-11, 45b, or Psalm 128, Romans 8:26-39, Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

**Romans 8:26-39.** (Please read: it is attached at the end)

When God sent His Son, He did not choose another person like Job, but volunteered Himself to suffer and die. Since He did not spare His own Son but gave Him up, will He not freely give us all things?

We should have every confidence that God is working on our behalf and if this is so, then there is no enemy which is able to threaten us.

Three questions bring out our understanding of the depth and power of God's love in Christ toward His people.

1. **Who will bring a charge against us (33)?**

God made us righteous in Christ!

2. **Who will condemn us (34)?**

Christ was condemned for us!

3. **Who can separate us from Christ (35)?**

Nothing, Nowhere, Never!

If we allow experience to dictate our theology, then we will end up in the grave like many around us. Instead we allow God's truth of being "in Christ Jesus the Lord" to forever bind us to Himself in His love and peace (cf. 6:23; 7:25; 8:39). Suffering might come but God's love is forever with us. He will keep us to the end to fully see His glory!

**Romans 8:26-39.** (Please read again)

**Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52** (Please read: it is attached at the end)

The 13th Chapter of Matthew contains seven parables of Jesus which each begins with the words "The Kingdom of Heaven is like..." Two of these parables, the Parable of the Sower and the Parable of the wheat and Tares were given separate treatment over the past weeks.

Today's text groups the remaining five, The Parable of the Mustard Seed, The Parable of the Leaven, The Parable of the Hidden Treasure, The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price, and The Parable of the Dragnet. There are some similarities between some of the parables as well as some differences. But as a whole, they together give us a picture of the Kingdom of Heaven. The parables also tell us that we need to evangelize. This is summed up at the end of the Gospel. "when you have gone out (to the Gentiles), make disciples of all the Gentiles (nations), baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you." This Gospel is not to be added to, nor diminished. It is to be as it has been said: "The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

### **Hymn:- [Let Your Kingdom Come](#)**

We have read Matthew and the Parables; we have had explanations of these parables and we have listened to the hymn above. Has this had any effect on You? When you mix with people, as the rules and regulations now allow, do you talk about Jesus and His kingdom. Do you stand up for what is right as Jesus did or do you just go along with the crowd? Going along with the crowd or the path of least resistance is the easy path to take. As a Christian, the path is not always easy; but, with the strength of Jesus behind us we can make a significant impact on people's lives.

Go forth and explain "The Kingdom of Heaven is Like ....."

### **Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52** (Please read again)

To help you explore the Gospel further, there is **a reflection sheet** and also **all-age activities linked to the passage**, that you might like to use, if you have access to the internet. You can find these resources on the websites of the two churches and here are the links:- [www.lambournechurch.com](http://www.lambournechurch.com) [www.abridgeevangelicalchurch.org](http://www.abridgeevangelicalchurch.org)

### **Prayers.**

Dear Lord, I dedicate this coming week to Jesus. Thank you, father, for loving me with all Your heart, all Your soul and with all Your mind. Inspire me this week to love You more and push forward your Kingdom. Thank you Jesus for Your faithful and sacrificial friendship. Help me this week to be a faithful and sacrificial friend like you. Thank you Holy Spirit for listening to my many thoughts and words and dreams. Still my soul this week to listen much more carefully to Yours.

Add any particular people and situations that The Holy Spirit brings to your mind as you have been praying and then say our family prayer, **The Lord's Prayer**.

In the silence of this moment, I express my deep gratitude for the church. I bring before you the people of Abridge and Lambourne who are in need, who are lost, who are worried, who are sad and those who mourn. Father God please be with those people and let them know your supporting presence.

End your time of church-at-home by saying out this **Sabbath Blessing**.

May this day bring Sabbath rest to my heart and my home. May God's image in me be restored, and my imagination in God be re-storied. May the gravity of material things be lightened, and the relativity of time slow down. May I know the grace to embrace my own finite smallness in the arms of God's infinite greatness. May God's Words feed me, and His Spirit lead me into the week and the life to come.

**AMEN** (Sabbath Blessing by Pete Greig)

**Final hymn suggestion:** [Search My Heart](#) [Be with me Lord](#)

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## **The Epistle**

### **Romans 8:26-39**

The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written,

"For your sake we are being killed all day long;  
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered."

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## **The Gospel**

### **Matthew 13:31-33,44-52**

Jesus put before the crowds another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is 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."

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."

"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.

"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.

"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.

"Have you understood all this?" They answered, "Yes." And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."