



Church at Home ***Sunday 15th November 2020***

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the most high will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." Psalm 91:1-2

It is hard to believe that we are in lockdown again with all the mental pain and anguish that it brings. The words from Psalm 91: 1-2 and Psalm 46:1 are words that we need to keep reflecting upon **"He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."** Psalm 46:1, is my favourite verse of the bible, and the words "He is my refuge" have been with me not only for the past 8 months but for many many years. God is our refuge and strength – and it is in God that I trust.

This Sunday's Bible readings include:

Judges 4:1-7 – The lesson we learn from Deborah is the need to "sit." She was a wise, powerful woman who lead, counselled advised, preached, and sometimes just sat in silence

Psalm 123 – This Psalm is short, and therefore a very fit example to show the force of prayer not to consist in many words, but in fervency of spirit.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 (Epistle) – Always be ready for the coming of Christ to judgment, which will be with suddenness and surprise.

Matthew 25:14-30 (Gospel)– One of Jesus' most significant parables regarding work is set in the context of investments

Before we sing, read or pray. Today, we need to stop striving to sort out all the world's problems, as well as, your own. Instead just make space for the Lord to speak to you though the readings for today. Sunday is a day to be born again. So, take time to get right with God, to repent of your sins, give thanks for the cross, to receive the Holy Spirit from God.

Suggested hymns: [Be Thou my Vision](#) [Lift High the Cross](#)

Saying sorry: Bring the past week before God, remembering the good and the bad things that have happened; naming those moments that let God and other people down; asking forgiveness for the good we failed to do and the blessings we failed to pass on. Turn to Jesus who is the rescuer of the world, the one sent to deliver us from slavery and to break down the gates of hell.

Prayer of Confession

Lord we acknowledge that there have been times when we have not shared the riches of your kingdom with others.

Times when we have taken the easy route, choosing options that require less time, less energy, less thought.

Times when we have turned back to the ways of the world, that are contrary to the values of your kingdom.

And in a moment of quiet we bring into your light our own personal confessions.

Lord, we remember you are a God of mercy and grace, who forgives us and transforms us, by the power of your Spirit, into the people you have truly made us to be. **Amen.**

Hymn [Jesus name above all names](#)

First thoughts on today's Gospel

One of Jesus' most significant parables regarding work is set in the context of investments. A rich man delegates the management of his wealth to his servants. He gives five talents to the first servant, two talents to the second, and one talent to the third. Two of the servants earn 100 percent returns, but the third servant hides the money in the ground and earns nothing. The rich man returns, rewards the two who made money, but severely punishes the servant who did nothing.

The meaning of the parable extends far beyond financial investments. God has given each person a wide variety of gifts, and he expects us to employ those gifts in his service. It is not acceptable merely to put those gifts on a closet shelf and ignore them. Like the three servants, we do not have gifts of the same degree. The return God expects of us is commensurate with the gifts we have been given. The servant who received one talent was not condemned for failing to reach the five-talent goal; he was condemned because he did nothing with what he was given. The gifts we receive from God include skills, abilities, family connections, social positions, education, experiences, and more. The point of the parable is that we are to use whatever we have been given for God's purposes. The severe consequences to the unproductive servant, far beyond anything triggered by mere business mediocrity, tell us that we are to invest our lives, not waste them.

God does not endow people with identical or necessarily equal gifts. If you do as well as you can with the gifts given to you by God, you will hear his "Well done." Not only the gifts, but also the people have equal worth. At the same time, the parable ends with the talent taken from the third servant being given to the one with ten talents. Equal worth does not necessarily mean equal compensation. Some positions require more skill or ability and thus are compensated accordingly. The two servants who did well are rewarded in different amounts. But they are both praised identically. The implication of the parable is that we are to use whatever talents we've been given to the best of our ability for God's glory, and when we have done that, we are on an equal playing field with other faithful, trustworthy servants of God.

For our prayers, let us remember:

- The families and businesses of the village.
- Our leaders as they work out how best to handle spikes and fresh outbreaks of the virus here and abroad, and all those on the quest for an affordable vaccine for all.
- For those we know who are sick, at home or in hospital and those whose lives have been shattered during this crisis.
- For students, whose plans have had to change.

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**.

Hymn: [At the name of Jesus](#) [Hope of the World](#) [Angel Voices ever singing](#).

End your time of church-at-home by saying out loud the words of **The Grace**, reaching out your hands to include in your imagination all those you know and love, who live here in the village and beyond

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