

## SUNDAY 11<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER HARVEST

Welcome & Announcements

Call to worship from Psalm 65

Praise Song- 'In All the world'

Prayer

Old Testament Reading - **Amos 9:13-15**

Video- the Ark

Hymn HP 352 we plough the fields and scatter.

New Testament Reading- **John 4:27-39**

Sermon

Prayers for Others

Hymn HP 355 Come ye thankful people come

Blessing

Psalm 65- You care for the land and water it;

***you enrich it abundantly.***

The streams of God are filled with water

***to provide the people with corn,***

<sup>10</sup> You drench its furrows and level its ridges;

***you soften it with showers and bless its crops.***

<sup>11</sup> You crown the year with your bounty,  
***and your carts overflow with abundance.***

The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders;  
where morning dawns, where evening fades,  
***you call forth songs of joy.***

**Praise Group** – Song 'In all the world'

**Prayer** God , the great artist & creator of the universe, we come this morning during this season of Harvest to worship You; the giver of life and beauty .... We see your fingerprints in the awesome wonders of creation and in the small thoughtful details of our lives.... So we come this morning to give you thanks... thanks for the wind that rustles our hair... thanks for the sun that brings us warmth & light... thanks for the waves that crash against our shores. We worship You as the wonder making God this day and we give You thanks for all of your many rich blessings to us...

And in the stillness now we have that opportunity to whisper our own prayers of praise & thanks to God...

Lord we do indeed thank you, but we also now confess that at times we like your people of old can be quick to grumble. So we also ask now for your forgiveness this day, forgiveness for our selfish attitudes & ways... forgiveness for when we take your gifts for granted... Have mercy on us Lord, cleanse our hearts from ingratitude & help us be quick to praise & slow to grumble... Amen

**Old Testament Reading – Amos 9:13-15**

*The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman and the planter by the one treading grapes. New wine will drip from the mountains and flow from all the hills, and I will bring my people Israel back from exile. "They will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them," says the LORD your God.*

**Video-** The Ark children with readings & prayer

### Hymn- We plough the fields.

We plough the fields and scatter  
the good seed on the land,  
but it is fed and watered  
by God's almighty hand.  
He sends the snow in winter,  
the warmth to swell the grain,  
the breezes and the sunshine,  
and soft refreshing rain.

(Refrain) *All good gifts around us are sent from heav'n above;  
then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord, for all his love.*

He only is the Maker  
of all things near and far;  
he paints the wayside flower,  
he lights the evening star;  
the wind and waves obey him,

by him the birds are fed;  
much more to us, his children,  
he gives our daily bread. [Refrain]

We thank you, then, O Father,  
for all things bright and good:  
the seed-time and the harvest,  
our life, our health, our food;  
no gifts have we to offer  
for all your love imparts,  
but that which you desire now:  
our humble, thankful hearts! [Refrain]

### New Testament Reading - John 4:27-39

Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?"

Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?" They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

Meanwhile his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something." But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about." Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?"

<sup>34</sup> "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. <sup>35</sup> Don't you have a saying, 'It's still four months until harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields!

They are ripe for harvest. <sup>36</sup> Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. <sup>37</sup> Thus the saying ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true. <sup>38</sup> I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labour.” Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.

## SERMON

I have to say it’s a rare occurrence...a bit like a day when Liverpool get beaten 7;2 & Man Utd lose 6- 1 ... Yes it doesn’t happen often but sometimes rarely I forget about food...& it’s usually because I am so preoccupied with something, something has gripped me so much that for a short time...food just doesn’t seem that important

Over the past few weeks we have been looking at the book of Exodus & we have in a sense been wandering with the Israelites in the wilderness as God has provided for them time & time again... Water from the rock...Manna & Quail...deliverance from their enemies...We have seen God provide in the midst of extremely difficult & dangerous circumstances...

So this morning we come even though this is a difficult & dangerous year, to give thanks for all that God has blessed us with, food, shelter, protection & his love....Yes this morning we say thank you, & as part of that we are also remembering others as we bring our offerings for the local Food Bank....For being thankful isn’t just a feeling... it’s is a practical thing... Yet as we do these things we know that this is a year unlike others & so for a time I want us think not just about our bodies need for physical food... but also about the food that can sustain us through this year... and beyond....

As Jesus says in our NT passage .. His food “*is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.*”

Jesus’ words here come just after his famous conversation with a Samaritan woman at a well ....His disciples had headed off to buy food for the continuing journey and Jesus had met a woman from the local Samaritan village who had come to draw water from the well... I know that many of you will remember this portion of scripture as Jesus starts engaging this burdened woman in conversation and slowly, but surely, she begins to realise that this is a meeting like no other... that this is a life changing opportunity ,that here in the heat of the noon day sun as she seeks to avoid the other women of her village ...this thirsty woman is being offered *living water...* It is during this exciting life changing moment that the disciples arrive back from the village with the food for lunch... And Jesus who sees deeper and more clearly than them tells them that he has *‘food to eat that you know nothing about.’*”

Yes as grateful as I am sure Jesus was for the lunch that they had bought.... at this point, as hungry as he probably was, Jesus had something more important on his mind than just bread. For Jesus had just seen a troubled, lonely woman drink from the well of God’s grace and forgiveness and now a door was opening for other hungry thirsty people to be filled as well...

This morning as we celebrate that *all good gifts around us come from heaven above...* we also remember that human beings *don’t live on bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God’*” Mt4:4. Yes this morning we remember that human beings need more than just physical sustenance.. We need a real personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ.... This isn’t an optional extra.... it’s not just the icing on the cake ...it’s the true food that satisfies in a way that NO OTHER CAN....

This morning if you have never tasted that forgiving & sustaining food from God's table, if you have never come hungrily to Jesus asking for His forgiveness & continued grace for life... then please understand that you are missing out on the most important thing that God wants to give us all...a real relationship with Himself, a relationship that can sustain us through these troubled days...

As I said at the start, I like a good meal....in fact I even like cooking sometimes... especially curries...So yes it's rare for me to be so focussed on something that I forget my food... And so my second point this morning, for myself as well as us all, comes in the way of a question.. When was the last time that you or I went without lunch or dinner because we were so concerned about someone else...so excited about what God was doing...so focussed on sharing God's love that we simply forgot to eat..?

Now I am really not trying to make any of us feel guilty today, but in these challenging times, days when it might be easy to slip into just thinking about our own needs...it's important to remember that there are all sorts of physical, social & spiritual needs & opportunities out there in our world at the moment. Yes going back to our John 4 passage let's picture the scene... Jesus' disciples were trying to get him to have a bit of lunch. While Jesus was trying to get them to look around them at the spiritual Harvest that lay before them...a harvest of lives that could be impacted with God's grace... for at that moment walking up the hill towards them was a crowd of Samaritans from the village... people who had been invited by the woman at the well to ***'Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah'***

Yes as followers of Jesus we need to remain excited about God's work... we need to have our eyes & hearts open to what God is doing. As Jesus said to his followers..***Do you not say 4 months***

***more & then the Harvest? I tell you, open your eyes & look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.*** ... perhaps this morning we would like to turn this command of Jesus into a prayer... Perhaps we would like to ask God to give us eyes that are open to the opportunities for harvest around us...openings for us to see God at work touching hearts & changing lives.

Yes, don't we need God's help to get excited & help us believe that lives can still be touched & changed...? Because let's be honest it can be difficult. We can believe that God might work somewhere else...in Africa, or India or America...or that God can use other people...people who perhaps have been to bible college or are better communicators. However so often it can be hard to believe that God has a work here & now for us to do, a work that through prayer, sharing & practical acts of care can lead to a harvest.

Now as I have said... I like my food... and yes I will occasionally cook especially curries... and yes I will even sometimes go out to buy the things that I will need for a particular meal...BUT of course those ingredients for my curry, the beef, the vegetables the spices... they are farmed, grown, produced by a whole host of other people who work hard ...so that you and I can enjoy good things to eat...As we remember today those who work hard to provide food for us... so too we go back to our passage and see that Jesus tells us that just as there are different people involved in getting our meals on to our tables...So too God uses different people in different ways at different times... to see lives saved & brought into His kingdom... or as Jesus says in our passage. ***'One sows and another reaps' is true.*** <sup>38</sup> ***I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labour.'***

Was Jesus thinking about the Samaritan woman when he told his disciples that others had done the hard work? Was he telling them that out of wonder at what had happened to her this despised Samaritan woman had conquered her fears...& shared her story, a story that had made others listen ...made others thirsty for the same living water.. So now they walked towards Jesus & his disciples wanting to know more...

These may be challenging days in a challenging year... and so often most of us aren't sure what we can do ... Well let us begin with prayer... it's so important, so vital... & just a reminder that this Wednesday at 7.30pm we will be having a time of prayer for our world our church & this present crisis. You can if you feel able come physically to our hall or you will be able to join us on zoom... or you can just take some time where you are to join with us in prayer by sitting down at home & bringing these times to our heavenly Father... WE can pray... but we can also ask God to give us the courage & compassion to listen & look out for others..& the boldness to share our stories of faith...with people who are thirsty, hungry... longing for something more than just physical food...

It's a rare occurrence when I miss my food.. but perhaps this Harvest Sunday we can dare to ask God to give us a few more days when we choose to do so for the sake of His kingdom...

**Prayers for Others** Lord in this strangest of years we thank you once more for the Harvest, that we have food to enjoy...food to share. So now we pray for our world, a world where many still need the basic essentials that we take for granted...

We pray for those who are hungry & thirsty this day....

We pray for those who lack opportunities to health care or

education...

We pray for those who haven't heard the gospel of God's grace in Christ.

Lord we also continue to pray that you would help us all be mindful of what we can do to help prevent the spread of Covid 19 & care for each other.

So we pray also for our Church & other local Churches- Lord may we continue to work together to help everyone in our community & may we know your clear guiding and preserving hand at work in and through us.

So we bring to God now those who have sought our prayers.

For , 10 year old Leo, for Timothy Haret, for Daniel Kidson, for Paul McDowell, Jean Woods, Jean & Jerry Mchaffee, Bernie McKee, Sarah, Lucy, Anna, Mark, Trevor, George, Susanne & Liz.

We also remember those who have experienced loss at this time... the family of **Percy Foster, Margaret Mawhinney & family, the family of Tina Donaldson & family of George Mckee.**

And we say together the Lord's prayer

**Hymn Come ye thankful people come.**

Come, ye thankful people, come,  
raise the song of harvest home!  
All is safely gathered in,  
ere the winter storms begin.  
God our Maker doth provide

for our wants to be supplied;  
come to God's own temple, come,  
Raise the song of harvest home.

All the world is God's own field,  
fruit as praise to God we yield;  
wheat and tares together sown  
Unto joy or sorrow grown;  
First the blade and then the ear,  
then the full corn shall appear;  
Lord of harvest, grant that we  
wholesome grain and pure may be.

For the Lord our God shall come,  
and shall take the harvest home;  
from the field shall in that day  
All offenses purge away,  
Give his angels charge at last  
In the fire the tares to cast;  
But the fruitful ears to store  
In the garner evermore.

Even so, Lord, quickly come,  
bring thy final harvest home;  
Gather thou thy people in,  
Free from sorrow, free from sin,  
There, forever purified,  
in thy garner to abide;  
Come, with all thine angels, come,  
Raise the glorious harvest home!

Prayer- Lord God we thank you again for your provision, physically,  
emotionally & spiritually & we ask you to help us play our part in  
seeing your harvest come in...

And we share the Grace together- *The grace of the Lord Jesus  
Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be  
with us all forevermore. Amen*