

Second Sunday after Pentecost

14th June 2020

Opening Song: EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW - THE WILDS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fQUq5rwodVo&list=FLhH3K7BX0MtSgANwiHYjNoQ&index=108>

Call to Worship

L: You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood,

P: a holy nation, God's own people,

L: in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him

P: who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

Opening Prayer

L: Out of deep need, we enter your holy temple, O Lord, seeking your presence and your guidance. As Jesus charged his waiting disciples, deliver now your charge to us. And lead us, as he led them, into the fields white unto harvest, that we may become faithful labourers in your vineyard.

Confession and Absolution

P: Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we confess to you that by nature we are sinful and unclean, and that we have sinned against you by thought, word and deed. Therefore we flee for refuge to your infinite mercy and plead for your grace for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Most merciful God, you have given your only Son to die for us: Have mercy on us, and for his sake grant us forgiveness of all our sins. By your Holy Spirit increase our knowledge of you and your will, and make us obedient to your word, so that by your grace we may come to eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

L: Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy on us, and has given his only Son to die for us, and for his sake forgives us all our sins. To those who believe in his name he has given the right to become children of God, and has

given them his Holy Spirit. Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved.
Grant this, Lord, to us all.

Amen.

Song: Behold the Lamb - Stuart Townend

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ACHPwx7EGQA>

Readings

Exodus 19:2–8a

Psalm 100

Romans 5:1–8

Matthew 9:35 – 10:8



Sermon: Matthew 9:3-10:8

The little red hen wanted to have fresh bread so she decided to plant some wheat to make flour. The little red hen asked, “Who will help me plant the grain in the soil?” but the other farm animals couldn’t or wouldn’t help.

Who will help me harvest the grain?

Who will help me thresh the grain?

Who will help me grind the grain?

Who will help me sift and knead the flour?

Who will help me make the bread?

If you recall this story you will remember the answer to each of those questions posed by the little red hen.

Sometimes Christians can be like the other farm animals. They want to be served but they are unwilling to become servants of the Kingdom of God. They are content to receive the perks and benefits of church membership without considering how they could use their time, finances and spiritual gifts for the work of advancing the kingdom of God on earth.

Some mistake the church of God for something akin to a cruise ship with passengers and crew. Some doing all the work while others seem to have all the fun. Perhaps the church should be more like a Viking long-ship where everyone rows, everyone fights the battles and everyone enjoys the benefits in common. If some are wounded in battle the others carry them until they are well enough to take their part again.

That's what I see when I think about the Christian church. People pitching in to sow and reap the harvest, rowing, fighting the good fight and supporting and helping one another.

Ours is a great church to belong to. And I say that not to make us feel superior but to commend and encourage each one of us to become all that our God has planned for us to be. It is exciting to consider the wonderful things God has planned for us as his people in the world as his family, as his holy priests, his special people. Of course it is all of grace isn't it. Our place of privilege in God's family is all a gift from beginning to end. We don't deserve to be his children but that is what we are in and through Christ.

Of course how we use our time and finances and spiritual gifts to advance God's kingdom makes no difference to our salvation. As we know we are saved by grace through faith in Christ and not by works. That truth will surely stir us to a life of service so that others may come to know the grace of

God that we have come to know through the witness of those who have gone before us.

If you are a baptised, believing follower of Jesus you have passed from darkness into light, from death to life, your sins are forgiven, and your future as God's child is secure. That's the best news this side of eternity.

So how might the story of the little red hen sound from the perspective of being saved by grace through faith in Christ? I think the little red hen would have done all the work and then without a thought for herself given the bread to those who simply asked. Sounds like something Jesus would do doesn't it?

No good works are necessary. That's good news for people who mess up every day. You see no matter what we do or don't do, God still loves us. Take a moment to translate that into what he did for the Hebrew slaves in Egypt. They had nothing to offer. He did it all because of love, completely undeserved. The same applies to you and me. What a marvellous God we have!

What should our response be to such amazing grace? How will you use the things God has freely given you to advance the message of his love to others? Is there room in our lives for an attitude of gratitude for all that God has done for us? We are his royal priests and his holy nation, how do we respond to the privilege he has invited us up into?

Perhaps God is inviting you and me to rediscover our gifts and abilities and use them the best way we deem suitable to advance God's kingdom. Some will have more time. Others will have finances to release for God's work. Some will be gifted in ways that others are not. In the end all will be blessed. Lives will be transformed and souls won for the kingdom and we will have invested in the blue chip stocks of heavenly places. Amen.

General Prayer

Heavenly Father, we pray for the nations of the world - for an end to war and for peaceful resolutions of conflict; for wise government and for honesty in commerce and industry. Come to those we spend the day with, through our godly work and conversation.

Lord, in your mercy: hear our prayer.

We pray for your church - for obedient leadership, including in our own presidents and pastors, and for faithful discipleship; for unity of teaching and belief among Christians on the basis of your word and for the mission of the church throughout the world. Show us your face in those who speak your word and apply your righteousness to us, and move us to receive them gladly.

Lord, in your mercy: hear our prayer.

We pray for our community - for loving nurture of children and for care of the vulnerable; for respect for individuals regardless of status or power; and for the well-being of all. Come to those who need the gospel through our words and actions, and move them to receive you through us.

Lord, in your mercy: hear our prayer.

We pray for all in need or distress - for relief for those suffering from natural disasters; for hope for the despairing. Show us your face in those who suffer, and stay your hand of judgment on the world.

Lord, in your mercy: hear our prayer.

Protect all those who are travelling for business or for pleasure and bring them home safely. Give health to those struggling with sickness at this time. Show us your face in those we can help, and meet the needs of those we now name silently in our hearts... (brief silence)

Lord, in your mercy: hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, in your mercy give us all these things and whatever else we need on our journey to our heavenly home; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Song: Keith & Kristyn Getty - Facing A Task Unfinished

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOpt_bulJxY&list=FLhH3K7BX0MtSgANwiHYjNoQ&index=34

Benediction

When you leave this place, go with confidence in God's gracious love and mercy. Go, ready to proclaim the good news and serve our Lord by caring for others. AMEN.