

Sunday Service ~ April 6, 2025

Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church

Welcome & Prayer

King David wrote in Psalm 145 about the Lord "*I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever.*² *Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever.*³ *Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom.*⁴ *One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts.*⁵ *They speak of the glorious splendour of your majesty— and I will meditate on your wonderful works.*⁶ *They tell of the power of your awesome works & I will proclaim your great deeds.*⁷ *They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness.*"

Let us come worship the Lord this morning, let us pray...

Dear Lord and Father of mankind forgive our foolish ways. For we have forgotten who is the boss. We have neglected to worship the one who rules the world and instead we have exalted ourselves, we have put others before you & we have failed to worship in thought word and deed this last week. Please forgive us. And place within us your Holy Spirit so that we want to put you in the pre-eminent spot in our lives. We want to worship you, serve you, love you and follow you in all that we do and say. Draw us closer to you this day through word and song. Help us to be committed more and more to your ways and to your thoughts and to your will. And then send us out to people the people of God in your place and your time so that all may see that you are our King and that you are worthy of all praise for ever and ever. Amen.

Song – The Chorus of the Saved <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ilpVNCSoH8k>

1. See the radiance of God Risen Son
All the angels rejoice at his name
All creation sustained by the power of his
word
And his throne will endure for now and ever

3. Through his blood our forgiveness is sure
By his Spirit within we'll endure
Holding on to this hope
as an anchor for the soul
And our eyes fixed on Jesus
the one who saves us

2. Perfect Son sacrificed once for all
Power of sin, fear of death now destroyed
Raised to life, raised on high,
Jesus name above all names
His acclaim will resound beyond the ages

Chorus

Chorus
Come join the song
in earth and heaven voices raised
In the chorus of the saved
Come shout his name,
come lift a sacrifice of praise
With the chorus of the saved

Bridge

Now let us draw near the holiest place
Our hearts full of faith,
our lips full of praise
So let us draw near
the holiest place
Now pure through his blood,
our sins washed away

Chorus

Bible Reading – Matthew 13:1 – 9 (NIV)

"That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. 2 Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. 3 Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. 4 As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. 5 Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much

soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. 6 But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. 8 Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. 9 Whoever has ears, let them hear.”

Announcements

Focus for Month: Easter. For many Christians, the time of Lent helps them get ready for Easter. Presbyterians do not tend to celebrate Lent so what can we do this year to be ready for Easter? How about we read a gospel in the coming 3 weeks? Or spend extra time in prayer? What about read a book on the cross or the resurrection? Invite someone to the Easter services? Ring up someone who used to go to our Church that has dropped away? Or invite someone to your home over the Easter holidays? We all need to find a way to make Easter the most important time of the year.

Charlestown Church has moved! For the next 4-5 months we will be meeting at Charlestown Public School, on the corner of Smith St and Fredrick Sts. Please have a look around for the extra jobs that need to be done (set up, car park attendant, clean toilets afterwards, first aid office etc) and see if you can help out with something.

Working Bee. Many thanks to all those who came yesterday to help prepare the site for our redevelopment. We hope the building will start in the next couple of weeks.

School Holidays.

This is the last week of the NSW School term. Next Sunday when school holidays begin, Kids Church will operate as it is today. With kids being dropped off at the Cottage by 9:40am and a full lesson being taught. The only exception will be THRIVE who will join us at Church for the next 3 weeks

New City Catechism: Question 14. Did God create us unable to keep his law? No, but because of the disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, all of creation is fallen; we are all born in sin and guilt, corrupt in our nature and unable to keep God’s law. Scripture: “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned” (Romans 5:12)

Easter Services

17/4 Last Supper Communion Service: 4:30pm (Swansea) & 6pm (Charlestown Office)

19/4 Good Friday: 8am (Swansea) & 9:45am (Charlestown Public School)

20/4 Resurrection Sunday: 8am (Swansea); 9:45am & 6pm (Charlestown Public School)

Swansea Ladies Morning Tea - Monday 14th April 10am at Channel Café Swansea. All Welcome.

Swansea Church. After last Sunday’s congregational meeting, we have reached out to C3 who are a looking for a temporary church home. From the last week of April (and for a period of up to 6 months) they will be using our facilities between 9:30-11:30am on a Sunday morning and between 4:30-7pm on a Friday evening. They will pay us \$200 pw for this privilege.

Pastoral Prayer

Pray for Mali (Population 24 million, Christians, 0.5 million). “The fear is increasing every day... there are abductions, all kinds of attacks and banditry... Please pray for us that god will keep his children safe.” For Christian organisations working in Mali as they seek to strengthen traumatised believers. That God will provide political stability and religious freedom for all Malians.

Pray for A Rocha. Pray for A Rocha as they engage in practical works of Creation Care, work alongside Church and Church organisations and provide environmental and theological education. Pray for the new directors coming on this year that they will provide new energy and ideas going forward. Pray for the awarding of government grants and for the opportunity to spread the message of caring for God’s environment. Pray for Stuart Blanch for the time and energy to chair this organisation amidst many other demands on his time.

Pray for the people of Myanmar and Thailand as they recover after the devastation of the 7.7 magnitude quake. Pray that it will open up opportunities for Christian aid work to go into these countries and show the love of Jesus.

Pray for the newly elected Committee of management and for the Deacons as they go about their vital work behind the scenes. Help them to be good stewards of the resources that have been given to us and to care and love deeply so that the gospel of Jesus might flow out from this place.

Bible Reading – Matthew 13:10-50 (NIV)

10 The disciples came to him and asked, “Why do you speak to the people in parables?” 11 He replied, “Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. 12 Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. 13 This is why I speak to them in parables: “Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. 14 In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: “‘You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. 15 For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise, they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.’ 16 But blessed are your eyes because they see & your ears because they hear. 17 For truly I tell you, many prophets & righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it. 18 “Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: 19 When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. 20 The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. 21 But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. 22 The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. 23 But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

Song – God is for us <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iPZnFLhItzQ>

1. We won't fear the battle, we won't fear the night
We will walk the valley with You by our side
You will go before us, You will lead the way
We have found a refuge, only You can save

Chorus

Sing with joy now, our God is for us
The Father's love is a strong and mighty fortress
Raise your voice now, no love is greater
Who can stand against us if our God is for us

2. Even when I stumble, even when I fall
Even when I turn back, still Your love is sure
You will not abandon, You will not forsake
You will cheer me onward with never-ending grace

Chorus

Bridge

Neither height nor depth can separate us
Hell and death will not defeat us

He who gave His son to free us
 Holds me in His love
 Repeat Bridge
 Chorus x2

Sermon – Soils ain't soils (Stephen T)

Sermon link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9fWAo7Z8tI>

In 1986, Castrol GTX launched their iconic advertising slogan, “Oils Ain’t Oils” The series of advertisements featured a gangster and his mechanic. The gangster wanted nothing but the best for his car and the mechanic was persuading him that the new GTX was better than anything else on the market because it was using the latest technology that had developed man-made synthetic oils.

In one of the ads, the mechanic had been kidnapped by a hypnotist, who was trying to put him into a deep trance and declare that oils was oils. But he refused. Soon after, the gangster storms in with a shovel in his hand and rescues his mechanic. He tells the hypnotist that now he is going to put him into a deep trench. You mean a deep trance, the hypnotist replied? No, a deep trench. As the ad ends with a variation on the theme, soils ain’t soils.

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Which is why I have labelled Jesus’ Parable of the Sower with the tag line soils ain’t soils. Because the book of Matthew is about to enter into a new phase. Last week we saw that the opposition was growing from both Jesus family and the Jewish leadership and so from now on Jesus will be careful about what he says in public. He will still teach his disciples in private and prepare them for when he will leave them but for the rest he will speak only in parables.

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“That same day Jesus went out of the house & sat by the lake. 2 Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat & sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. 3 Then he told them many things in parables.” So, what are parables? Well firstly they are

1. Stories that are taken from Real Life (verses 1-9)

Now when I say that, I am not saying they are true stories, that Jesus is recounting an actual event. Instead, they are stories about real down to earth subjects. Topics and situations that would be well known to the people of Jesus time. Parables are simple stories about seeds, plants, birds, fish and trees, that highlight a spiritual truth.

Parables are not like sermon illustrations where the preacher aims to make an abstract idea more concrete or to explain a complex issue more simply. Nor are they an allegory where every part of the story needs to be explained. Instead, parables often only have one central truth and will help us to understand one single big idea. As the listener hears what Jesus is saying in the parable and ponders it deeply, they move from being outsiders to insiders.

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Parables then are a bit like a stained-glass window. When you are inside the church and light is streaming through you get to see the picture in all of its beauty. But if you are outside at the very same time the windows are quite dull, grey and lifeless. You need to be on the inside to enjoy their story. Parables then give the crowds a chance to become one of Jesus insiders, his disciples. It also allows Jesus to fascinate his hearers without alienating them.

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So, let’s have a look at our first real life story. I’m sure it will be a very familiar one to you.

"A farmer went out to sow his seed. 4 As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. 5 Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. 6 But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root."

Slide 6

7 "Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. 8 Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. 9 Whoever has ears, let them hear."

Now on one level that's a story about farming isn't? In those days a farmer didn't plough up the field and then plant the seed in the furrows. No, they took a bag of seed, and walked up and down his field taking fists full of the grain and throwing it everywhere, till all the ground is covered with seed with little regard to where it may fall. That's the picture here.

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Most of these seed will not produce a crop because it falls on the path or in the shallow soil or amongst the thorns. But the seed that falls on the good soil will more than make up for it. It will produce a harvest, a great harvest. Now there will be no harvest without a sower, or without the seed but the key thing is, which soil will the seed land in? Because soils ain't soils. The crop will only grow when the grain is sowed into the good soil.

Now you can imagine that when the people first heard that parable, they might have wondered what the point of Jesus teaching was? Is he telling them to be careful where I plant my seeds next spring? Duh. That's pretty obvious, isn't it? Not really worth travelling miles in the heat of the day to hear Captain Obvious teach me a Sunday School lesson. So, for many they would scratch their heads and go home. But notice some actually push back.

10 "The disciples came to him and asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?" You see the parable is one way that Jesus sifts out his hearers. Some will listen. Others will truly hear and others will miss the point completely. And isn't that still true of people today?

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The story is told of William Wilberforce, the man who introduced the first anti-slavery legislation into the British parliament, one day brought his non-Christian friend, the Prime Minister, William Pitt, to hear one of the greatest evangelical preachers in London, a man called Richard Cecil. Well, that Sunday Cecil delivered a truly great sermon – Biblical, eloquent, passionate, forceful and clear. And Wilberforce was thrilled with the preaching.

As they walked away, Wilberforce asked Pitt what he thought? "You know Wilberforce, I haven't the slightest idea what that man was talking about." And Jesus parables are a bit like that, because not only are they real, but at times they will also

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2. Conceal (verses 11-15)

11 "He (Jesus) replied, "Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. 12 Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them."

For parables are not simple stories to make difficult concepts much easier to understand, they will reveal its deep, spiritual truths to some and conceal them from others.

Look back at how this parable starts and ends. Jesus begins in verse 3 with the call to "*listen*," and concludes in verse 9, "*let him who has ears to hear, let him hear*." This is not just about farming. There's a hidden layer of meaning to this. And some will get it & some won't.

Jesus says the knowledge of the kingdom of heaven has been given just to the disciples and not to the crowds. But it's the exact same teaching! But one will take what they already know and add to it and the other will take their ignorance and add to that as well. That is the point of why Jesus is teaching in parables. "*Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand*.

One of the tasks of the parable is to conceal the truth to those who don't want to look for the truth. In a way it is a bit like Isaiah's prophecy. Isaiah proclaimed the good news, some of the most amazing prophecies in the OT, just before the nation of Israel went into exile. Just before they faced the awful judgement of having their king humbled, their temple destroyed, their priests and leaders deported and their land trashed.

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Into that context Isaiah is called to tell people God's word. But as God's people hear God's word, we find out that "*You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. 15 For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise, they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.*"

Isaiah's hearers didn't want to hear. They don't want to see, what God is doing among them. Their hearts are hard, calloused even! So, the message goes in one ear and out the other, giving them no excuse. They can't say they were not warned. They can't say God didn't give them one last chance. And so, because they didn't really hear what Isaiah was saying, his message condemns them. They are blowing their last chance. And now the people of Jesus time are in exactly the same situation. They hear but they don't have ears to really hear. These parables are concealing the truth from them rather than revealing the truth to them.

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The apostle Paul says something similar in 1 Corinthians 2:14, "*The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him and he cannot understand them because they are spiritually discerned.*" To understand Jesus teaching you need the Spirit. You need Jesus' help to give you sight and let you to hear and to change your heart. And isn't that what we have seen Jesus do for people these past few chapters of Matthew? He wants to do that for people but the seed has to fall in the right soil. Soils ain't soils. Spiritual growth only comes when the seed lands in good soil. Then it

Slide 12

3. Reveals (verses 16-23)

16 "But blessed are your eyes because they see & your ears because they hear. 17 For truly I tell you, many prophets & righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it."

The knowledge of the secrets of the Kingdom of God are available to those who have ears to hear. Those who are willing to push back and ask for wisdom from Jesus. Those who have invited God's Holy Spirit within them. Those who have received a heart transplant and got rid of their old hard heart and replaced it with one that is open to the things of God.

Slide 13

So rather than just a nice agricultural story, Jesus is telling us about the hearts of all mankind. And which ones will be fruitful and whose lives will be fruitless. *18 "Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: 19 When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path."*

Jesus is the sower & right now he is spreading the seed, the good news to people far & wide. Not just in Palestine in 30AD but to Lake Macquarie in 2025. And that seed will land on four soils, which represent four different types of hearts. You see soils ain't soils. Depending upon what sort of soil your heart represents, depends upon how much spiritual growth there is.

Now if the seed lands on a stony path, it is not going to make one iota of difference. The word of God comes to some who just don't understand it. It makes no sense to them. Its pie in the sky when you die. It isn't as important as making money, making friends, making the most of this life and so the message doesn't penetrate into that person's life. And so, the seed is vulnerable to Satan coming and snatching it away.

You see there are two things going on here. The person is not open to considering spiritual things and Satan doesn't want to give them a chance to change their mind. And the result? No crop. No growth. Not a revealing of their true state before God but a concealing of the fact that Satan not God, is the one pulling the strings in this person's life.

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A stony heart and then there is the superficial heart. 20 "*The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. 21 But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.*" The word of God comes to this second type of person and there is an initial response. A joyful response. But it's short-lived response.

Because when trouble or persecution comes their way, the roots haven't been able to go deep enough into their lives. They haven't counted the cost. Maybe it had been easy beliefism, just come down the front & your sins and problems will be gone. And they aren't. Or maybe we have sent our young people to a youth group with their friends that is more social than spiritual. Or maybe we show an initial interest in Jesus but our family and work cranks up and we take our eyes off Him & put them onto ourselves & walk away from Jesus.

George Whitfield, the great English evangelist of the 18-century used to preach to massive crowds many of whom came forward after his sermons to give their lives to Jesus. Often, he was asked how many people were saved and he would say, I'm not sure. We will find out in a few years' time.

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There are the stony hearts, superficial hearts and then thirdly stifled hearts. 22 "*The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful.*" The word produces growth and that growth might last many years but worry and money take over and stifle or strangle any such growth and choke the producing of any fruit.

Our credit cards control us, or our internet shopping or gaming, or pornography, or ambition, or Sunday sport, or the children's education, or one of a million other things comes between you and the sun. And so, no growth happens.

Do you see what Jesus is revealing to us here? Satan, suffering and stuff will often work against any form of spiritual growth. And so, if these things are creeping into our lives, we need to be careful, incredibly careful. Get rid of anything that is coming in the way of your relationship with Jesus. Ask God to unharden your heart, to destrangle your heart, to deepen your heart and to lastly to make sure you have a successful heart.

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23 "But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word & understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown" The sign of a good heart is that there will be spiritual growth coming from that source. Love for God will be growing. The fruits of the spirit will be growing. Love for others will be growing. For this is saying that if the word of God is placed in the right environment there will always be growth.

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Now in those days the average yield of field was about 8 times what was sowed but when God's seed does its work there be a superabundant harvest. Not 8 times but 30 times or 50- times or even 100 times what was planted. For all Christians bear fruit, some a lot, others a lot more and others still an awful lot more. That's the power in the seed. The good news will make a difference in your life.

So, the call is to welcome the word immediately. To make sure that it is placed within your heart deeply. And make sure nothing else is given such exclusive access. The word, the bible, Jesus is the one who has to be planted in the very centre of our lives. And he promises if we do that, you and I will thrive.

Now let me tell you how this parable rings true in the life of my family. In a way my Mum is like the seed on the path. Hardened to the things of God. When I talk to her about Jesus you get nowhere. It doesn't mean that God may not crack open her heart sometime in the future but for all my life the word of God has been given no chance to thrive in her life.

And then there is my younger brother, in his late teens and early twenties, he came to Church, led a bible study group even and was filled with joy for Jesus but then peer pressure, job pressures and marrying a Catholic bit by bit caused him to move away from Jesus. I still have hope for him but it does seem at this stage he had a superficial heart.

Then there was my Dad, brought up in Church, a methodist lay preacher who married my mum and one day had to make a choice between Church and family. And chose his family. Which gave me a stable home and a secure upbringing at the cost of his relationship with the Lord. He had a strangled heart. And lastly there is my cousin whose gone through many highs and lows in her life but is still producing a crop of spiritual fruit. She's the fourth soil.

The same gospel. The same word of God but different responses. Depending upon the state of their heart. So, what is the state of your heart? Is it faithless and stubborn? Shallow and Shaky? Worried and worldly or faithful and fruitful? That's not something that I can judge for you. But it is something you can take to the Lord in prayer.

Plead with him to reveal the truth. Ask him to show you the fruit. Call on him to soften your heart. And prepare yourself for when Satan wants to snatch the gospel away from you, when suffering will take the joy away from you and when stuff will squeeze the life out of you. So that no matter what the world, the flesh and the devil throw at you, your heart will continue to produce a fruitful, God honouring crop.

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4. Parables Heal (Verse 15)

Hear again the challenge of verses 15. Be a person who "might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, & understand with their hearts." Allow Jesus to affect what you see and what you look at. Ask him to enable you to hear the voice of God calling you at each and every moment. And that he was give us all spiritual understanding around what God is doing in our hearts, our minds and our bodies.

For then, when we "turn, he will heal us." Not conceal things from us but reveal the truth in us and bring about the healing we all need. Healing of body, mind and soul.

In the meantime, the call of the parable is to keep sowing the seed. Spread the word. In every direction. We know that not everyone will respond but that those with a good heart will come into the kingdom. And so, we sow the seed, day in and day out. And whether it looks like it is effective or not, God will bring the growth. God is responsible for the growth. God promises that there will be growth. So, we leave the growth completely in his hands.

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What is in our hands though, is how we respond to this parable. In Matthew 13 we are told 19 times to hear. Hear what God is saying to us today. For e.g. Matthew 13:9 "*Whoever has ear, let him hear.*" We have the chance not just to listen but to hear what Jesus is saying to us. Make sure that our ears are connected to our heart & so it changes our inner most being.

But do you know this parable is the only parable that appears in Matthew, Mark and Luke. And Mark ends this parable with the challenge, "take heed **what you hear.**" What are you listening to at the moment? Your own inner thoughts and struggles? The needs of the people around you? Or God's voice? What you hear is really, very important.

And in Luke's gospel the call is to "Take heed... **how you hear.**" There is a good way to hear and a bad way. So concentrate hard. Take notes. Discuss it in a Bible Study. Apply it to your own life. Reflect on the passage again towards the end of the week to see if it has made any difference. Hear. Heed what you hear and how you hear.

Because a tiny seed of the gospel can bring about superabundant growth in our hearts and lives. A small step of faith can have amazing consequences to the people around you. A simple sowing of this seed could bring others into the kingdom. Let God do his work to bring in his kingdom. And let us respond by hearing and obeying the word given to us today.

Song – O Church Arise [Keith & Kristyn Getty - O Church Arise \(Arise, Shine\) \(Lyric Video\)](#) [ft. Chris Tomlin - YouTube](#)

1. O Church Arise and put your armour on
Hear the call of Christ our Captain
For now the weak can say that they are strong
In the strength that God has given
With shield of faith and belt of truth
We'll stand against the devil's lies
An army bold whose battle-cry is Love
Reaching out to those in darkness
2. Our call to war to love the captive soul
But to rage against the captor
And with the sword that makes the wounded whole
We will fight with faith and valour
When faced with trials on every side
We know the outcome is secure
And Christ will have the prize for which He died
An inheritance of nations
3. Come see the cross where love & mercy meet
As the Son of God is stricken
Then see His foes lie crushed beneath His feet
For the Conqueror has risen
And as the stone is rolled away
And Christ emerges from the grave
This victory march continues till the day
Every eye and heart shall see Him
4. So Spirit come put strength in every stride
Give grace for every hurdle
That we may run with faith to win the prize
Of a servant good and faithful
As saints of old still line the way
Retelling triumphs of His grace
We hear their calls and hunger for the day
When with Christ we stand in glory

Benediction

"But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown." (Matthew 13: 23)