

Well Hello and welcome once more to our service for 27th of September 2020. Good morning all and a very warm welcome to all listening in live at this time either on the web or on the phone.

A few little intimations that are basically repeats of the last few weeks. Today after this service please sign the Call for Nigel if you haven't already done so.

Last chance to get your Requests to Stuart for next weeks programme so please remember to email on - all lower case , ready with a pen?  
right is it all lower case - [requests@kirkgatechurch.org.uk](mailto:requests@kirkgatechurch.org.uk), and last chance to get your articles to Elizabeth for the magazine for October.

Today I have touched a little in the prayers and even tenuously in the sermon with a harvest theme. We have lost a good lot of the usual Christian calendar events so it is good to remember those who produce the food and materials that we need for our good health. We can also think of harvest as a mission for the Christian as well, the white fields ripe but with gatherers being few. And of course mainly the rest in Christ that we need in our lives at this time of anxiety, worry and fear for many because of the Covid 19 and all the implications where we need the peace of Christ to dwell in our lives.

But first let us here the call to worship and it comes from psalm 95  
3

For the Lord is the great God,  
the great King above all gods.

4  
In his hand are the depths of the earth,  
and the mountain peaks belong to him.

5  
The sea is his, for he made it,  
and his hands formed the dry land.

I know we cannot sing but we can listen and Stuart will play the tune of a few verses of that traditional harvest hymn

**“We plough the fields and scatter the good seed on the land”**

you may remember some of the words that I will recite for us now.

We plow 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, oh, 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 winds and waves obey Him,  
By Him the birds are fed;  
Much more to us, His children,  
He gives our daily bread.

*Refrain*

We thank Thee then, O Father,  
For all things bright and good,  
The seedtime and the harvest,  
Our life, our health, our food;  
Accept the gifts we offer  
For all Thy love imparts,

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And what Thou most desirest—  
Our humble, thankful hearts.

*Refrain*

Music - Organ/Keyboard. We plough the fields.....

Let us pray

Loving Lord God, this week has brought blessings in many ways even in times of trial of Covid 19 we feel You close when we are in the depth of despair. The sun has touched the leaves of the trees around us silently as they slowly change colour to rich hues, the crops ripen in the fields and harvest time is all around us once more bearing crops from the wonderful life in the soil.

The feel of Autumn is in the air. Lord Your creation is amazing, it is beautiful, it demands our appreciation and care and for it we give our thanks.

Father God who gives life and takes life to Yourself, we are blessed to have a creator who loves, who provides and who can come close to us through all wind and weather. You are our loving God who came to be with us as the Son of God our Saviour and Friend Jesus.

Holy Spirit who comforts and brings strength to our arm for the harvest, in the fields and in the Kingdom work, we thank You for Your silent inspiration and encouragement.

Lord in Your beauty open our eyes to the white fields of harvest before us, lead us to the places where we dare not enter for fear of man, lead us to the places where the harvest is plentiful where we have failed in our Christian duties of love.

Forgive us Lord God for the reticence we have shown in nurturing our faith and being diligent to guard against sin that calls us always to temp us afresh each day.

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Lord who gives life and who takes life to Yourself, we give our lives into Your loving care once more in the strong name of Jesus who taught us to pray those words of life themselves when we proclaim Your Kingdom come on earth now, but not yet fully until Jesus returns as He promised.

Hear us now as we pray in that name as we say together

Our Father, who art in Heaven

Hallowed be Thy name,

Thy Kingdom come,

Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread

and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil

For thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory

For ever

Amen

Hebrews 4

New International Version

### **A Sabbath-Rest for the People of God**

**4** Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it.

**2** For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed. **3** Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said,

“So I declared on oath in my anger,

‘They shall never enter my rest.’”

And yet his works have been finished since the creation of the world. **4** For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: “On the seventh day God rested from all his works.”

**5** And again in the passage above he says, “They shall never enter my rest.”

6 Therefore since it still remains for some to enter that rest, and since those who formerly had the good news proclaimed to them did not go in because of their disobedience, 7 God again set a certain day, calling it “Today.” This he did when a long time later he spoke through David, as in the passage already quoted:

“Today, if you hear his voice,  
do not harden your hearts.”

8 For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. 9 There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; 10 for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. 11 Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.

12 For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

13 Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

### **Jesus the Great High Priest**

14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. 16 Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

My Reflection today is entitled: - Soul rest in Jesus

We are looking today in Hebrews , or the Epistle to the Hebrews. Author unknown but sometimes attributed to St. Paul or at least of the Pauline Tradition. It is thought to have been written in the 1st century to Jewish Christians suffering persecution for their faith in Jesus. It assures the readers that Jesus is more important than the

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Mosaic Law that He came to supersede and is more important than Joshua or Moses, He was and is the Son of God.

It reminds the audience to persevere even in the times of the hardest, sharpest persecution and suffering.

Hebrews calls for the Christian not to fall short of gaining that rest or peace for the two words are synonymous. Rest in God, peace in Jesus.

And true rest is only found through diligent and deep faith.

We are warned that rest of our Lord God cannot be fully and profoundly felt by us if we do not have a strong hold on faith. If we do not believe on the Messiah, Jesus the Christ of God.

Well I wanted to have a Harvest theme to today's service as we are missing a lot of traditional events in church this year.

Perhaps it is a tenuous link when we talk of rest for the soul and compare it to the rest some may take from labours after harvest time. But it serves to give us a picture for the weary soul trudging home after a long hard day.

The labourer, the farmer, the vineyard workers that we spoke of last week, the fruit pickers could all relax a little if the harvest was good. Hay all stored away, straw in the barn the grain threshed.

Then the darker winter nights come on and fresh bread, butter milk and home made jam delight the family at the fire. An idyllic picture of life in the country is it not. I hear that advert music in the background "Going Home going Home"

Rest of a physical kind yes, yet we need to understand that we also need rest of a spiritual kind. For the restless spirit is not at peace most of the time. A soul feeling empty and lost despite the work and the distractions all around is not joyful by nature perhaps. It seeks a deeper meaning in life than all the temporal trapping that surrounds it.

Jesus speak in many of His parables about nature - using illustrations from the farming of His day - the seeds that are scattered, the lilies of the field - the fight against invasive weeds.

Yet He also realises the emptiness and hunger in humanity. Come to me all who are thirsty and drink from me. I am the bread of life all who come to me will never hunger.

**Matthew 7:37 for instance**

**On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink.**

Jesus assures the reader in Mathew 11 that all who carry heavily burdens should come to Him and leave that burden with Him and take up His yoke that is light. There is therefore a rest in obedience. Rest in the work of the Lord.

We still tend to think of rest in our modern era as sleeping, lying down, sitting down after a hard day in an office. Taking a day off at the week end, going on a holiday to forget everything for a little while.

Of course that type of rest is required of us. God commanded that we do take a Sabbath or rest from working by God's own example creating in 6 days all things on earth and in the cosmos and on the 7th day took rest.

Indeed the Sabbath is more than just a rest day. It is a day whereby we witness of God's grace and Glory. It is a covenant thing with God. Not only did the Israelites have to keep the Sabbath rest, by doing so they were showing their allegiance and belief and obedience to God.

Within a Christians labour in mission field there is rest. How so you might ask, for work cannot be described as rest?

Well yes in a temporal sense, but not in a spiritual way.

As I understand it, such rest that I speak of is found in God and His service as taught by Jesus. It is a rest that means we fully mix it with faith. For rest and faith go hand in hand, inseparable when we work in the Kingdom of the Lord..

**Hebrews 11 1. Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. 3. By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. By faith we see the hand of God - for we walk by faith and not by sight as the song goes.**

Verse 2 warns us

2 For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed.

The writer here is talking about the ancients coming out of Egypt wandering the wilderness before Canaan. They heard the law through Moses. They were in the company of God.

Even in Jesus time all that He proclaimed about the Kingdom being close at hand. Hearing gave them the opportunity, but the opportunity only profited if it was **mixed with faith**.

You see one may hear God's word and have spiritual experiences, but unless the work of God is mixed with faith it will do no good.

Where do we find such rest then. Why is it important not to fall short of it as verse 1 advocates. Especially in time of trouble like we are in today, or if the harvest fails. For if we falter in the faith we will fall short of God's perfect peace or rest.

Verse 1 also warns us about falling short.

This place of rest is so wonderful that we as Christians should be concerned if we think we are falling short of it.

Like the athlete finishing the race a fraction behind the winner. Not quite there just short. “an inch is as good as a mile”. A miss no matter how close was still a miss.

Are we seeking that rest or falling short of it today?

So rest doesn't really mean sitting down and doing nothing in the Kingdom. It means among other things that we have found peace and joy in serving. In doing the will of Him who is perfect peace and rest Himself, our God in Heaven.

Rest is have a deep faith that brings assurance that Jesus was and is who the word of God the Bible tells us He is. God incarnate. God who brought us peace with the Father in Heaven by His death on the cross and His resurrection victory and ascension into Glory from whence He came.

Rest is the place we need to find ourselves in this life to be fully Christian, walking in the green pastures by the quiet waters. A soul fully immersed with love and trust in Christ.

Verse 14 on reassures us that Christ Jesus is our High Priest and who cares so much for you and I as He sits higher than all before God, even the angels, where He intercedes for us 24/7.

In ancient tradition, the Jewish High Priest would enter the Temple once a year with much traditional paraphernalia of incense and sacrifice to ask forgiveness for the Jewish people.

Jesus is our High Priest, the Lamb of God, the fragrance of life, who continually covers our sin that we might be regarded as Holy and Righteous before a Holy and Righteous God.

**So our rest is in a *person* – in Jesus Christ, more than in doctrines and ideas.**

When we have that rest we can face all the suffering, that the world and satan wants to throw at us. That is the rest that allows us to say to one another in times of extreme turmoil or trauma, “I don't know what I would have done without my faith?”

Faith mixed with peace.

In all this then, through all the months of lock down - not seeing loved ones - afraid for the future - missing our church gatherings among other social events that all came to a stop in March, where is our rest and peace of mind and heart?

Peace in our Spirit?

The world has been shaken to its core by this pandemic, by constant wars, by raging storms and fires, Climate change bringing near disaster to the whole planet. In all this darkness where do we go for our light?

While we sit through another partial lock down with all its confusing rules, let us not forget that we are loved, deeply loved by God. We are given the gift of peace with God through Jesus. That peace and rest is there for all who come and confess their sins and repent. All who look at Jesus and give their lives into His care. A better way of life that the world is failing to give.

If the mind has worked overtime in worry, the heart sore in grief and the feet worn out by walking the floor when sleep evades us, then let us pray for deliverance into that Heavenly rest, even if we have little or no faith at the moment. Seek that rest with all the heart mind and souls for in doing so we are seeking God, for it is His rest that HE withheld from the ancients who were disobedient.

For through simple prayer, searching the living word and asking Jesus to help us restore your faith or grasp it for the first time let us

go remembering that it is still there for the asking, it never stopped on the 7th day, it is still available to us as He calls this 'Today'.

So there is a deep truth then in verse

16 Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. If you feel you need some rest and helming, some answers from God, some comfort then we'll pray into that in a Moment

Remember the farm workers and other producers of our food and water who never stopped producing what we need - working away in the back ground, but let us not forget about Jesus as He labours in love for us that we might never be thirsty and hungry again in a spiritual sense as we live in Him and He in us before we of faith Him go to be with Him in everlasting peace in Heaven.

Shall we pray.

1 The LORD restored us, we were freed:  
our life was like a dream!  
We laughed and sang: the heathen said,  
'The LORD did this for them.'

2 The LORD had done great things for us,  
as every eye could see;  
he made our thankful hearts rejoice,  
he set the captives free!

3 Restore us, LORD, again, we pray:  
make desert waters spring;  
for those that sow in tears today  
at harvest time shall sing.

4 The sower who goes forth and grieves  
to see such barren ground  
shall carry home his golden sheaves,  
while songs of joy resound.

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Psalm 126, David G. Preston

© D.G. Preston/Jubilate Hymns

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Lord of the harvest bring new growth around us, before us and within us as we journey through this year and lift our weary Spirits in glorious tranquil rest. There are dear Christian followers who are in need of You this day Lord God. They close their eyes and bow with creased brows for Your indwelling Spirit to touch them anew and bring peace and comfort to their sore hearts today. I also need that Father as life takes many a strange turn. We bring our burden and lay them before Your cross that we might be rid of our world pressures and we await that precious gift of rest and peace in following Jesus and obediently taking up His ways. And through it all Lord God help us to trust more fully in Your care and protection as we seek to deepen our faith in Your Son Jesus. For we pray in His name.

Amen

Music Organ/Keyboard -

O Soul are you troubled and weary (Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus)

Shall we pray for others and give thanks to God also for all the good gifts He graciously allows us.

Loving Lord God, we give thanks today for all the things You give us. For the food, clothing and shelter, for the opportunities to live better lives, to put distractions behind us in a safer environment as we diligently live out a life of faith in Jesus our Lord and Saviour.

We give thanks for the fields that bring forth much fruit, in temporal ways and we give thanks for the fruits that You help bring forth in Spiritual ways among us.

Lord we acknowledge Your gracious gifts that we know we shouldn't deserve, but by Your extraordinary lavish love and care we benefit greatly.

With that in mind Father we pray for all those who lack much of the basic things that we take for granted at times. For clean water food and shelter. But most of all peace and rest in You and a loving environment in which to thrive. We think of places in the Asia minor where war and conflict still exist and where enmity simmers under the surface between cultures, ideologies and religion. Lord in Your great mercy hear our prayers for peace in those areas, a release of all from the refugee camps so that they might go home again to start rebuilding and plant their own seed for a harvest.

We remember places torn to shreds by war and political extremism. We think of the Yemen where many cry out to the world beyond for mercy and help. We raise some sub Saharan areas of Africa before You Father where extremists are murdering and maiming Christian brothers and sister and ask for safety and perseverance in that situation where the Christians can keep an air of love, even for their enemies and where they can feel free to live in safety once more.

Abba Father this week has seen a sharp rise again in the Covid 19 pandemic. Lord we continue to pray for all who have the virus and are seriously ill, for all those who have lost family and friends to it and for all those recovering yet still suffering side effects. Lord in Your mercy hear our prayers for healing, comfort and peace. WE pray that by Your Spirit You will assist the chemists to find this allusive vaccine that will prevent the virus spreading and a cure that can eradicate it where needed.

Lord of all creation your planet cries out for rest. Rest from plundering, rest from toxic fumes, rest from over production, rest for our once thriving animal species that we are driving into extinction by our selfishness.

In all hopelessness and despair we trust in You Father God that Your grace will be sufficient for this planet, and that You will answer these prayers in Your perfect timing and according to Your will.

Please hear these the heart felt sincere prayers of the heart from Your children gathered in Jesus name and listening in as we take a time of silent prayer to the Lord.

Heavenly Father once more we bring a token of our love for Your Kingdom works here on earth and we commit this free will offering into Your care knowing it will be directed wisely with Your help.

In all these silent and spoken prayers Lord God we raise them before the Throne of Grace and Mercy in the name of Jesus and for His sake.

Amen

### Hymn Be still soul (unannounced)

Well once more thank you for taking time to listen in to our service recording once more until we meet once more lay down those heavy burdens before God so let us hear the words of the blessing.

### Be at Peace By Saint Francis de Sales

Do not fear what may happen tomorrow; the same understanding Father Who cares for you today will take care of you then and every day.

He will either shield you from suffering or will give you unfailing strength to bear it. Be at peace, and put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginations.

For we go now with joy and peace and the blessing of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit journey on with us once more now and forever.

Amen