



The Benefice of St Mary's Bocking & Panfield Church



Sunday 16th July 2023
The Sixth Sunday after Trinity
Staying in Contact

The Very Revd Rod Reid - Incumbent (*usual rest day Monday*)

Email: bockingchurch@gmail.com Call: (01376) 324887 www.stmarys-bocking.com
or on Facebook, search for 'St Mary's Church, Bocking', or 'Panfield Church'

Forthcoming Services

Hymns

St Mary's, Bocking

Sunday 16th July	8am/10am	Said Mass/Sung Mass
Wednesday 19th July	9.30am	Said Mass
Sunday 23rd July	8am/10am	Said Mass/Sung Mass

407

367

I cannot tell

Panfield Church

Sunday 16th July	6pm	BCP Evensong
Tuesday 18th July	5pm	Evening Prayer/Office Hour
Sunday 23rd July	11am	Holy Communion

587

Gospel Acclamation

*Speak Lord, your servant is listening,
you have the words of eternal life.*

NOTICES

Junior Church - Our Summer Term will finish on **Sunday 23rd July**, with a session on stained glass windows, please note the new date! We look forward to seeing as many as can make it for that. Drop off from 9.45am in the Church Hall. Dates for the Autumn Term will be announced soon.

Local wildlife walk - At **11.45am on Sunday July 23rd** there will be a wildlife walk around the village taking in Dorewards Farm, heading to the Windmill for their Open Day, and returning back to St Mary's. We are meeting by the Church Hall from 11.30am, Jacqui Hogger, one of our Eco Church leaders will be guiding us. This is open to anyone, either as an individual or with family and friends.

Benefice BBQ - You are invited to a BBQ on Sat July 29th from 3pm in the gardens at The Deanery, cost £5 for adults, children go free. At the back of the church there is a sign up sheet, please add your name plus any others you are bringing. Payment taken on the day. There is also a sheet to add any food items that you can bring, sweet or savoury. Thank you.

Coffee Morning - Thank you to those who attended the recent coffee morning and further supported the event with additional sales last Sunday. We are pleased to say £140 was raised!

Mindfulness Trail - From Monday July 24th through to Sunday July 30th there will be a mindfulness trail in the church grounds at St Mary's. This will be an interactive experience open to the local community. You can come and give it a go at anytime on each of those days. Leaflets with more info will follow soon.

Fellowship Outing - On Thursday 28th September there is a trip to Cromer Pier arranged. There are a few places left. Cost is £45 which covers the coach trip and The End of the Pier Show. The coach will

leave church at 9.30am. Please speak to Ann Lanham or Ann Harrington to book your place.

Fellowship - The next meeting is Thursday July 20th in the Church Hall, and the speaker is Cherish Watton who will be talking about the Women's Land Army. We start at 12.30pm with a light lunch followed by our speaker, the cost only £5, don't miss it.

Friendly Friday Cafe - The Summer Sessions are now drawing to a close with the last one being on Friday 21st July—this will have a Picnic Theme and will include a few table quizzes for you to enjoy.

Prayers - We keep in our prayers Ron Cole, Peter Hopkins, Jean Goodwin, Sue, Roger, Frances, Peter, Jo, Tony & Ann, David Denny, Eddie Burton, and Margaret Everitt. We remember our care homes Millard House, Fern Lodge, Aspen Grange, Larchwood, The New Deanery & St Mary's Court. In our Years Mind, we pray for the families of Catherine Bensley, Eileen Devonshire, Percy Coppin, Joan Bugby, Henry Kirby, George Cole, and Rosemary White.

The Collect for the Sixth Sunday after Trinity

Merciful God, you have prepared for those who love you
such good things as pass our understanding;
pour into our hearts such love toward you
that we, loving you in all things and above all things,
may obtain your promises,
which exceed all that we can desire;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Epistle Reading - Romans 8:1-11

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

Gospel Reading - Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: 'Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!' Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the

one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.'

Address

What a generous, uplifting and joy filled passage from Matthew's gospel this morning. The Parable of the Sower is so familiar to us and its clear message is about the God who loves us and loves us so much that he will with over-flowing grace continue to scatter seed, to bless that seed, and see it fruit.

A happy and optimistic few verses then. Maybe because it is such, it jars for us when held against today's world and often our own experiences. One look at the news both at home and further afield leaves us anxious and concerned for the state we find ourselves in.

The clamour for gossip, particularly if it is salacious only grows, the need to show the power we have over one another, and the need to dominate peoples and lands, it can be all very depressing. Then there are the day-to-day pressures we each feel from finances, family, to our health. Sometimes we can't even be nice to one another as people, nor fellow Christians. A look to General Synod's meeting last weekend shows that, let alone the correspondence I receive too which rarely, but on occasion is negative, discouraging and at times just cruel. That's life, and that's the way of it now, we can fire off an email, tweet, or Facebook message with little thought of the consequences.

I wonder if it is that tension that exists which means we switch off from passages like this in scripture, when in reality they have even more to say to us. The set verses today are Ch 13:1-9 and 18-23 but in those verses left out, Jesus explains that he tells parables as stories to enlighten others, but their meaning may well be different for us all.

Of course, the most fundamental message is for us to stop seeing the world through our eyes, where it feels like it is all going wrong and instead to try and view it with God's. That even in the midst of the hardest of moments, there is still goodness, that the journey will come good once again. You did not chose me, but I chose you we hear in John's gospel and a favourite verse of mine. God has already chosen you and me, whatever the world may throw at us, we journey through it with God.

Today then, with this familiar parable, jarring as it might be, but thankfully hope filled, we are called to pay attention, to notice what it says to us. Instead of stopping at knowing the story, we are invited to ask where we are in the midst of it. I was struck by one approach that asks us to see ourselves as the seeds. For where we find ourselves as seeds with the pressures, challenges of the world, whether it can feel like a hostile environment or something much more friendly, that all affects us.

I suspect you can think of times when situations seemed to be going well, the seed had taken root if you like, and then all of a sudden things go wrong, it is as if we have been scorched by the sun. Then there may have been times when it was not just one thing but many that seemed to be going wrong, that you felt choked by the weeds, constraining all that is going on and all that you might want to be. Much more positively there also times when we feel well nourished. When we feel the right person at the right times, and the fruit appears.

We can feel that we always need to be offering fruit, always being well nourished and that the weeds or scorching sun should never affect us. As we have talked about already though that doesn't seem like the society we live in today, there are too many who would knock us down. I think that we are called to pay

attention instead, to recognise each of those times for what they are. When things are going well, when we are enjoying life, to notice, to not take it for granted, or assume it will always be like that. We need to make the most of it, knowing that it is by God's grace.

God's grace is not limited to the good times though. As I mentioned before, he is always with us and so is his grace and blessing. So let us pay attention to where he is in the midst of those tough times too, doing so might just help us lift our heads a little more.

Part of paying attention is to also be alert to what we can do to dispel the weeds and revel in the fruit too. Not all the factors are in our hands, but some are. It is at these times I have learnt to do something that makes me happy. A favourite piece of music, film, or TV show, something that combats the negativity, unfortunately for others I can combine those things with singing.

Happiness is not going to solve our problems, but we can notice our need for it. To that end I like these words, that might be familiar to you.

To me this world is a wonderful place, and I'm the luckiest human in the whole human race.

I've got no silver and I've got no gold, but I've got happiness in my soul.

A wise old man told me one time, happiness is a frame of mind.

When you go to measuring my success, don't count my money count my happiness.

Life today is always going to be about holding things in tension. This is an authentic, realistic way to look at life. Today we are encouraged not to see the Parable of the Sower as some overly optimistic sign of who we could be, but to recognise that as the seed, we will experience all sorts of conditions, which will see us grow and others won't. Throughout it all God is with us, and encouraging us to pay attention to him, and to what is going on. Not to block him out, or turn away, indeed our greatest calling is to see him, hear him, to notice him whatever is going.

Throughout it all we can seek to find happiness, and I all hope we can do that today.

Did you recognise those words about happiness from earlier? If I mentioned a tickle stick and Ken Dodd, does that help? Yes, he sang about happiness and those words are lyrics from his song, the chorus of which we can all go out singing today.

Happiness, happiness, the greatest gift that I possess

I thank the Lord that I've been blessed

With more than my share of happiness.

Amen.

Post Communion Prayer

God of our pilgrimage,
you have led us to the living water:
refresh and sustain
us as we go forward on our journey,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.