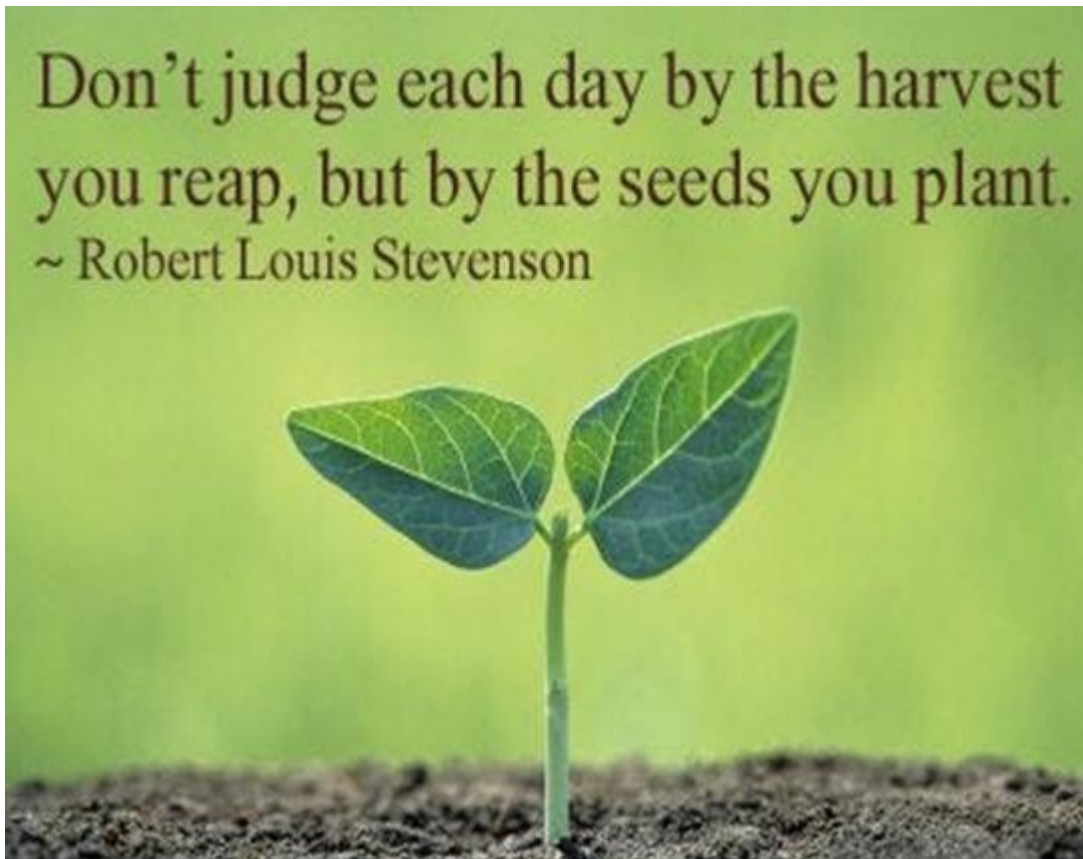


Dear Beloved,

The gospel reading this week is the parable of the sower but the combined slant of most the lectionary readings is about the word of God and what a blessing it is in our lives. In the parable the word of God is likened to a seed planted by God into people's lives. Nowadays God uses us and his hands and voice to plant those seeds of his word in season to people.



Blessings

Wendy

PTO →

“Art Warming”

- a festival of local voices & instruments

Presented by Snowy Monaro Arts Council Inc.

Featuring (*in alphabetical order*):

Cantabile

Cooma Community Singers

Cooma District Band

Cooma Guitar Ensemble

Monaro Gracenotes

with Justine Bristow & Nick Townsend

Sunday 30 July 2:00pm

Anglican Parish Hall

Commissioner St Cooma

Tickets at The Fabric Salon

Adult \$25 Concession \$20 SMAC Member \$15

School Students Free

Ticket includes Afternoon Tea

Steve Clark will do his next session on Saturday 5th August at 2.30 pm and then 2nd September

--

Wendy's last Sunday in the Parish 24th September

--

Morning Tea after the Service every 2nd and 4th Sunday. please volunteer for the roster.

--

Midweek Services every Wednesday at 9.30 all Welcome

--

Please volunteer for the church service roster, well in advance.

--

Prayer and Praise

Wendy

Catherine

Edith and Colin Mayhew

--

Glenn Fletcher

Alan Hood

our wardens and Parish Councillors

--

Bernie and Gayle

Scott's wife Jennie.

--

Beryl Lucas Mary Mitchell's sister in Palliative Care (Cancer)

Beattie Russell and Jenni Roberts in Yallambie.

--

Liz Pirie

Leanne Lowery

Mary Mitchell

--

Peter & Julie Harris from Bredbo

all congregations in Jerangle

--

The Catholic priest Father Mark Croker as he ministers from Bombala through to the mountains

--

for each other that we may be salt and light in this community

--

People everywhere who are living through war or disasters of every kind.

16 July 2023 The Holy Communion - THIRD ORDER

HYMN TIS 209 And Can it be that I should gain.

Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Blessed be God's kingdom, now and forever.**

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.
And also with you.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Matthew 22.37–40, Mark 12.30–31

Sentance

The words you have spoken are spirit and life, O Lord; you have the words of eternal life. John 6.63, 68

PRAYER: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Bountiful God, we thank you for planting in us the seed of your word: by your Holy Spirit, help us to receive it with joy, and to live according to it, that we may grow in faith and hope and love; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Genesis 25.19–34

¹⁹ This is the account of the family line of Abraham's son Isaac. Abraham became the father of Isaac, ²⁰ and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan Aram and sister of Laban the Aramean. ²¹ Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was childless. The Lord answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. ²² The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, 'Why is this happening to me?' So she went to enquire of the Lord. ²³ The Lord said to her, 'Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the elder will serve the younger.' ²⁴ When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. ²⁵ The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau. ²⁶ After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them. ²⁷ The boys grew up, and Esau became a skilful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was content to stay at home among the tents. ²⁸ Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob. ²⁹ Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished. ³⁰ He said to Jacob, 'Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I'm famished!' (That is why he was also called Edom.) ³¹ Jacob replied, 'First sell me your birthright.'

³² 'Look, I am about to die,' Esau said. 'What good is the birthright to me?' ³³ But Jacob said, 'Swear to me first.' So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob. ³⁴ Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left. So Esau despised his birthright.

Psalms 119.105–112

¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lantern to my feet: and a light to my path.

¹⁰⁶ I have vowed and sworn an oath: to keep your righteous judgements.

¹⁰⁷ I have been afflicted beyond measure: Lord, give me life according to your word.

¹⁰⁸ **Accept, O Lord, the freewill offerings of my mouth: and teach me your judgements.**

¹⁰⁹ I take my life in my hands continually: yet I do not forget your law.

¹¹⁰ **The wicked have laid a snare for me: but I have not strayed from your precepts.**

¹¹¹ Your commands are my inheritance for ever: they are the joy of my heart.

¹¹² **I have set my heart to fulfil your statutes: always, even to the end.**

Romans 8.1–11

¹ Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. ³ For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the righteous

requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ⁵ Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. ⁶ The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷ The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸ Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. ⁹ You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. ¹¹ And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

Matthew 13.1–9, 18–23

¹ That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. ² Such large crowds gathered round 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.' 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.'

The Sermon

THE NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ has promised that you will hear us when we ask in faith: receive the prayers we offer.

Response: Spirit of God: **Hear our prayer.**

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray, **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

We are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure. 1 John 3.2–3

CONFESSION

Knowing the goodness of God and our failure to respond with love and obedience, let us confess our sins, saying together, **Heavenly Father, you have loved us with an everlasting love, but we have broken your holy laws and have left undone what we ought to have done. We are sorry for our sins and turn away from them. For the sake of your Son who died for us, forgive us, cleanse us, and change us. By your Holy Spirit, enable us to live for you, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

God is slow to anger and full of compassion, forgiving all who humbly repent and trust in his Son as Saviour and Lord. God therefore forgives you in Christ Jesus, in whom there is no condemnation. **Amen.**

THE GREETING OF PEACE

We are the body of Christ. **His Spirit is with us.** The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also, with you.**
HYMN TIS 427 Lord your word abiding.

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have these gifts to share. Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom. **Blessed be God for ever.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.** Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, making us in your own image. We praise you for your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who by his death on the cross and rising to new life offered the one true sacrifice for sin and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people. Therefore, we lift our voices to praise you, saying,

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

And now, gracious God, we thank you for these gifts of bread and wine, and pray that we who receive them, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, according to our Saviour's word, in remembrance of his suffering and death, may share his body and blood.

On the night before he died, Jesus took bread, and when he had given you thanks he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat. This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' After supper, he took the cup, and again giving you thanks he gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Drink from this, all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' We eat this bread and drink this cup **to proclaim the death of the Lord.** We do this until he returns. **Come, Lord Jesus!**

Father, as we recall his saving death and glorious resurrection, may we who share these gifts be renewed by your Holy Spirit and united in the body of your Son. Bring us with all your people into the joy of your eternal kingdom, there to feast at your table and join in your eternal praise:

Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive praise and honour and glory and power for ever and ever. Amen.

We who are many are one body, for we all share in the one bread. The gifts of God for the people of God. Come let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in remembrance that he died for us, and feed on him in our hearts with thanksgiving.

The body of Christ keep you in eternal life. Amen The blood of Christ keep you in eternal life. Amen

Giver of life and love, we thank you that in this heavenly banquet you invigorate and renew us. Living in the unity of the Spirit, may we boldly use your gifts to continue your work in the world.

Father, we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice through Jesus Christ our Lord. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen.

HYMN TIS 376 I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVES

BLESSING: The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord: **in the name of Christ. Amen**



Then he told them many things in parables. When we hear a parable how do we react? Do we feel like we're back in Sunday school? Does it make us feel warm and comfortable, bored, and uninterested or invigorated, hoping to learn new insights? Parables were disturbing stories that threatened the hearers' secure world view. Parables were a means of disclosing new truths, not simply illustrations of truth. They are much more than metaphors, they are brief narratives, including one-liners that presuppose a narrative.

We are so used to hearing Jesus' parables that they have become embedded in our culture, but this hides the fact that when Jesus told them they were a new form of teaching. There is nothing like them in the Old Testament or Jewish culture. There was a traditional treasury of stock metaphorical ideas and characters (sowing, shepherd etc) however Jesus' method of communicating in parables was not the typical practice of rabbis but a new and unsettling departure in religious communication.



Jesus' listeners already believe that there will come a time when God will judge the world, dividing the righteous from the wicked. They were longing for that day when they (the righteous, of course) would be rescued from oppression but they didn't come to listen to Jesus so that they could hear it again. They were hoping that the judgement was beginning, and that Jesus would tell them more about the way Yahweh was beginning his work of rescuing them from their enemies, and perhaps wanting them to help in the process.

They were hoping for the Old Prophecies, that spoke of God's anger against his rebellious people but then of a new day dawning, to be fulfilled. On that day God would sow his field with crops that would bring in a harvest. Seedtime (teaching and preaching) and harvest (final judgement) had always been included in those metaphorical ideas, picturing how God would act to redeem his people from their sins, rescue them from exile and deliver them.



No wonder that when he began to speak about a farmer sowing seed, they listened intently but this was not the teaching they were expecting to hear. It wasn't about God sowing Israel in its own land at last. It was a story of both failure and success. It was cryptic. When Jesus said, 'If you've got ears, then hear' this is an alert to us meaning 'I know this isn't obvious; you are going to have to think about it'.

Jesus was saying that what they had been longing for and praying for really was coming true, not as they had expected, but real, nonetheless. He wanted them to figure it out and come back for more. We also need to listen and think about God's work in our time. What is God doing - what he's already done in Jesus and what he wants to do through us today.



Jesus has already seen, in the responses of many people to his announcement of God's kingdom, that there are certain common reactions which all lead nowhere; but there is also one reaction which will lead to the person becoming part of God's new work, a kingdom person who will be like a seed that produces a great harvest. The disciples, like their contemporaries thought that God's kingdom would arrive in a blaze of glory, bringing freedom, justice, and peace wherever it went but Jesus is suggesting it might come slowly, through his words and the reactions of his hearers.

This is how God works, If God had declared on a particular day that his justice would now operate throughout the world, the human race as a whole would stand condemned. Often in scripture we find the belief that God must delay his final action in order to give people time to repent, time to find their way to his loving presence. If he acts too speedily everybody would be caught and a few saved.



That is why the 'word' is so important in Jesus' ministry. The living word, the logos, is Jesus and he speaks living words to his people, he speaks God's word which announces the kingdom. The word goes out and does its own work in people's hearts and lives. Words change the ways people are inside, they give them an inner compass so that they can find the way or as Jesus put it: 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.

Not everyone who hears the words responds appropriately; some allow the evil one to snatch the words away at once. Most of us have experienced cynical and sneering reactions. Some seem to be enthusiastic, but when the gospel starts to make demands on them, they quickly show that the word never really became rooted in their lives. Some really do have a deep-rooted hearing of the word, but then they allow other things to take root in their heart as well and these other things choke the delicate plant of the word.



But there is also the promise of the seed that does bear fruit. When the word produces hearing and understanding, it is often hard work with slow results, but the harvest is sure. This doesn't happen by occasionally reading the bible, coming to church when there's nothing else to do or going to a bible study sporadically. Care and thought needs to be put into the task of hearing the word until it has taken proper root, and we can never give up.

Stones may need removing, thorns and weeds eliminated but when hearing brings understanding we know we are growing. And the promise is that we will not just have succeeded for its own sake, but that we will bear fruit in our own right. We become people who plant seeds and walk beside the tender shoots until they can recognise the farmer in their own right.



Although the Sower seems to have a minor role in the story, he does not just walk away at the end of the day and leave the seed to fend for itself. It is implied that the Sower is the farmer who also tills the soil, waters the tender plants, and fertilizes it. He is identified as Christ who is himself the one who is present and active in the sowing of the word, identifies and walks with his disciples, himself builds the church and will finally be the judge who separates the faithful from unfaithful disciples.

The emphasis in this parable is on the responsibility of the individual believer to produce 'fruit' (righteous deeds which become seeds). A disciple is one who hears and understands and puts into practice what they have understood. The good soil hears and does, understands, and bears fruit.



God works in us to produce the good seed of his word which he then plants by using our words and actions as we love and care for the people in our community. God's word is not just words of scripture but Jesus incarnate speaking through us. There will be various responses to the things we say and do, including cynicism, shallowness, and being choked out but there will also be words that will take root and bear a harvest. We might never see the harvest, but God is faithful, and he will bring it to fruition.

The line between sowing the word and reaping the harvest is not straight, instant or without problems. The word encounters many difficulties between its original sowing and its eventual harvest. We should never be. Sometimes when we think that a seed has died, whether snatched away, burnt, or choked God works a miracle and the seed grows after all.



I knew a lady who was recently converted from witchcraft, I had baptized her, but she announced that she was going back to her old ways. I was heartbroken but Phil kept in touch with her, and I recently learnt that she is going to a charismatic church and growing in her faith, God transplanted her into the soil that was right for her.

The victory of the kingdom of God is sure. The message of the parable is not an exhortation to work hard to bring in the kingdom. As silent, mysterious, and unavailable to superficial observation as the germination of a seed in good soil, the kingdom for which the disciples pray will certainly come. The seed has been sown by the son of man, who accompanies his church throughout history. The harvest is God's doing and God is faithful.



Bountiful God, we thank you for planting in us the seed of your word: by your Holy Spirit, help us to receive it with joy, and to live according to it, that we may grow in faith and hope and love; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.