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## SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

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Seventh Sunday After Pentecost

July 19, 2020

Anglican Parish of Raymond Terrace  
[www.stjohnsraymondterrace.org](http://www.stjohnsraymondterrace.org)

## SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Pray:

May I speak to you in the name of GOD – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen



In our Genesis reading, Jacob woke up one morning after having had a dream about angels ascending and descending a ladder reaching up to heaven where the LORD was – proclaiming surely GOD is in this place. ^GOD's covenant promise to Abraham and Isaac was also offered to Jacob. But it was not enough to simply be Abraham's grandson – Jacob had to establish his own relationship with GOD. GOD has no grandchildren – each person must have a personal relationship with Him. It is not enough to hear inspiring stories about Christians in our families. We need to become part of the story ourselves.

Our psalm tells us that sometimes we don't let people get to know us completely because we are afraid they will discover something about us that they won't like. But GOD already knows everything about us – even the number of hairs on our heads<sup>1</sup> and still He accepts and loves us. GOD is with us through every situation, in every trial – protecting, loving, guiding. He knows and loves us completely.

GOD is omnipresent – He is present everywhere. Because this is so, we can never be lost to His Spirit. This is good news for us who know and love GOD, because no matter what we do or where we go, we can never be far from GOD's comforting presence. This is a psalm of David; and David asked GOD to search for sin and point it out – even to the level of testing his thoughts. This is exploratory surgery for sin. How are we to recognise sin unless GOD points it out? Then, when

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 10:30

GOD shows us, we can repent and be forgiven. ^We can make this verse a prayer.

In the passage from his letter to Romans, Paul uses the term adoption or “sonship” to illustrate the believer’s new relationship with GOD. In Roman culture, the adopted person lost all rights in his old family and gained all the rights of a legitimate child in his new family. He became a full heir to his new father’s estate. It’s the same when we become a Christian – we gain all the privileges and responsibilities of a child in God’s family. One of these outstanding privileges is being led by God’s Spirit. We may not always feel as though we belong to God, but the Holy Spirit is our witness. His inward presence reminds us of who we are and encourages us with God’s love. We are no longer cringing and fearful slaves – instead, we are the Master’s children. What a privilege! Because we are God’s children, we share in great treasures as co-heirs. GOD has already given us His best gifts – His Son,

His Holy Spirit, forgiveness, and eternal life – and He encourages us to ask Him for whatever we need.

Even though we might suffer for being identified with JESUS, nothing can compare to the great price that He paid for us on the cross.

Our Gospel passage for today is the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares. JESUS did not explain the parable to His disciples immediately – but only after some further teaching. In his book containing meditations on the gospel of Matthew, Brother Simeon, a Trappist monk explains this rhythm of parable/interruption/explanation this way: “Like seeds in the soil and leaven in the dough, parables need to rest in our souls for some time and grow before we can become fully conscious of their meaning. British theologian Angus Ritchie says that patience is the central message of this parable. The householder holds back from dramatic and destructive intervention to save as much as possible of the harvest. Into the field of

wheat sown by our loving heavenly Father, an enemy comes to sow weeds. Although sin and evil purport to offer pleasure, the deeper spiritual reality is that their power is entirely destructive.

He goes on to say: GOD's patience reflects the nature of His harvest. His Kingdom cannot be brought about by violence of empire – for it consists in “righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit”. The refusal to uproot the weeds too early does not show indifference or detachment. While GOD refuses to compel our obedience, He offers us His very life – the life poured out on Calvary – and given to us as heavenly food.

Wheat and weeds/tares not only serve as metaphors for different people. As we discussed last Sunday, the heart of Christian disciples can be considered as the soil in a field, in which both kinds of plant continue to grow. What St Ignatius called the “discernment of spirits” – the ability to recognise within ourselves what is wheat and what is weed – requires patience, prayer, and often the wise

counsel of more experienced spiritual guides. Indeed, our very desire to purge and uproot those whom we consider to be worthy of condemnation is sometimes a manifestation of spiritual weeds – sown by the evil one. The message of this parable finds an echo in our passage from ^Paul’s letter to the Romans that “<sup>18</sup> I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. The Spirit causes us – and indeed the whole creation – to “groan inwardly” while waiting for a redemption that is both physical and spiritual.

As the wheat and the tares continue to grow and intertwine, we – like the early Christians – wait in hope for the final harvest.



Our Genesis passage reminds us that it is important for us to develop our own relationship with GOD and not to rely on the faith of others.

^The important message from our psalm is contained in the last 2 verses: [Search me Oh Lord and know my heart. Test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.](#)

Paul reminds us that our relationship with GOD is one of adoption. In Roman culture, the adopted person lost all rights in his old family and gained all the rights of a legitimate child in his new family. He became a full heir to his new father's estate. It's the same when we become a Christian – we gain all the privileges and responsibilities of a child in God's family.

And our Gospel parable today reminds us to be patient. "Like seeds in the soil and leaven in the dough, parables need to rest in our souls for some time and grow before we can become fully conscious of their meaning. Patience is the central message of this parable. The householder holds back from dramatic and destructive intervention to save as much as possible of the harvest.



And isn't patience an important consideration in these pandemic times. Patience and caution are what everybody needs during these strange times.



May we pray:

O GOD of all creation, you have established a kingdom of peace and justice in the hearts of your people that they might spread the good news of your providence to the ends of the earth. Help us to be courageous in this task and endowed with the power of the Holy Spirit. Through JESUS CHRIST your Son our LORD. Amen

Life Application Study Bible Daily Prayer 2020

GOD's Word 2020

Sunday's Coming Premium – the Christian Century

[newsletter@christiancentury.org](mailto:newsletter@christiancentury.org)

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2020/17-july/faith/sunday-s-readings/6th-sunday-after-trinity>