

ORDER OF SERVICE FOR SUNDAY 14TH JUNE 2020.

Greetings/Welcome:

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **Amen.**

Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians:

I pay my respect to the traditional custodians of this land in which we live, work and worship. To the elders and members of the Yorta Yorta nation, past, present and emerging.

Call to Worship:

Let us worship God – The world belongs to God, the earth and all its people.
Love and peace come together, justice and peace join hands. How good and how lovely it is to live together in unity...Lord open our lips and our mouths shall proclaim your praise.

Hymn: 217 (TiS) 'Love divine, all loves excelling'.

Prayer of Thanksgiving/Confession:

Ever-living God, you are infinite, yet compassionate; in you we live, and move, and have our being.

One with us in Jesus Christ, you share our life and our death; flowing through us as living water, you quench our thirst.

Holy One, we adore you; Holy Son of God, we adore you; Holy Spirit of God, we adore you; accept the praise we bring today and for ever.

God of all mercy, give us grace today to make a fresh start.

We know we have not loved you with our whole heart, nor have we loved our neighbour as ourselves.

As we hope to be forgiven, teach us how to forgive; and lead us forward in a new life where neither grudges nor resentment have a part; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

(UIW – 2)

Declaration of Forgiveness:

IN the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom; for God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

Hear then Christ's word of grace to us: 'Your sins are forgiven'.

Thanks be to God.

Doxology:

**Praise God, the source of life and birth;
praise God, the Word, who came to earth;
praise God, the Spirit, holy flame;**

all glory, honour, to God's name. (Can be sung to OLD HUNDREDTH, TIS 768 (i).) (UIW – 2)

Readings: Mathew 9:35 – 38 (NRSV)

35 Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness among the people. 36 When he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were harassed and scattered, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest indeed is plentiful, but the labourers are few; 38 Pray therefore that the Lord of the harvest will send out labourers into his harvest."

Message: 'The kingdom of God is a kingdom built upon compassion!'

Prayer: May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to you O God, our rock and our redeemer. **Amen.**

There's a story of a successful young lawyer who drove through a country town and spotted two men on the side of the road eating grass out of somebody's yard. Moved by what he saw, he pulls over to have a word with them.

"Hey fellas, what is going on? Why are you eating grass?" asks the lawyer.

"We're down on our luck, we have no jobs and we are very poor!" they both responded.

"Well then, come with me" the lawyer, out of compassion insists. "I'll do what I can to help, after all – its clear you're desperate for help."

After fifteen minutes' drive, the two poor men arrive at a beautiful estate on a five acres of land right on the fifteenth hole of a prestigious golf course. They became excited at the chance to finally get some work.

"Sir, we can't thank you enough! Thank you so much for this opportunity. We will make you happy!"

"Ah, it's no problem. I'm just happy to help," replied the compassionate lawyer. You can eat all the grass you want; it's got to be at least half a metre tall by now!"

Compassion! When that word is used, different people have different ideas about what it means. Religious people even appeal to God as the compassionate God.

Our reading today from the Gospel according to Mathew 9: 35 – 38 can shed some light on what compassion means.

We are told by Mathew that Jesus went about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the good news of the kingdom, and not just preaching and teaching, but he was also healing every disease and every sickness among the people that

followed him. But then the crowd grew, and Mathew tells us Jesus saw the multitudes and he was moved with compassion.

The meaning of his being compassionate as presented in our passage today is because these people were harassed, they were scattered, and they were like sheep without a shepherd.

A society or community without compassion, we will always find people being harassed for different reasons, a community without compassion will be divided and scattered. Just like sheep without a shepherd.

They are lost, they are hungry, they are homeless, and they are alienated. And the only thing worse than being harassed and scattered, is that they become vulnerable to those who preyed upon them for their own convenience, like the lawyer mentioned before.

May be its unfair to mention just the lawyer, and you might say, 'how about the religious people?'

Here's a story published in the 'Biblical Resources for Preachers and Teachers of the Word of God'.

A man fell into a pit and couldn't get himself out. A Christian Scientist came along and said, "You only think that you are in a pit." A Pharisee said, "Only bad people fall into a pit." A compassion-less fundamentalist said, "You deserve your pit." A Charismatic said, "Just confess that you are not in a pit." A Methodist came by and said, "We brought you some food and some clothing while you were in the pit." A Presbyterian said, "This was no accident, you know." An Optimist said, "Things could be worse." A pessimist said, "Things will get worse!"

But, Jesus, seeing the man, took him by the hand and lifted him out of the pit.

That is the essence of the compassion of Christ. He not only suffers with you, he will save you. It is called GRACE!

It is interesting that after Jesus saw the multitude with compassion, he said to his disciples, "The harvest indeed is plentiful, but the labourers are few" (v. 37), and summoned the disciples to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send labourers. Then, he called his apostles.

Here, the basis of ministry for the church and for all Christians is set forth. The God of compassion is calling labourers of compassion to proclaim the good news of the compassionate gospel to all who are harassed, scattered and lost.

In our compassion-less societies and communities, the call is out for labourers and harvesters who gather the scattered, who advocate justice for the harassed and champion the servant leadership of the Son of God. Amen.

Offering:

Prayers of Intercession:

Jesus, friend of all the world, you have compassion on all who come to you for help; hear the prayers we bring for your people.

We pray for the nations of the world: for your people who daily face conflict and oppression; for those who live in poverty and deprivation; for leaders of nations, for all who govern and for those who administer the law.

Fill them with your compassion that they labour for you in peace and righteousness.

We pray for our community and for all whom we love:

For those without food and for those with nowhere to live; for those without work and those with too little rest;

Fill us with your compassion that we may labour for you, and work to create a compassionate society.

We pray for all who are in trouble or distress: for those without support or friends or family; for the sick and the dying and for those who are grieving.

Fill us with your compassion that we may reach out in love to comfort and to heal.

We pray for your worldwide church: for leaders of churches and councils; for missionaries and evangelists, for teachers and chaplains; and for all who work to bring your good news to the world.

Fill us with your compassion and send us out to labour for you, that we may help to proclaim to the world the good news of your kingdom.

Jesus, friend of sinners, in your mercy,

hear our prayer. Amen.

Hymn: 407 (TiS) 'Breathe on me, breath of God'.

Blessings: (Aaronic)

The Lord bless you and keep you;

the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you;

the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.