



Readings for this week:

Monday	Reading 1 Cor 10:1–11:1 Pray for Huw Jones (back soon to NTC)
Tuesday	Reading 1 Cor 11:2–16 Pray for Vivienne Kenyon
Wednesday	Reading 1 Cor 11:17–12:11 Pray for Beverley Mitchell & family
Thursday	Reading 1 Cor 12:12–13:13 Pray for Kingdom, Debi, David, Sarah & Faith Matsetlo
Friday	Reading 1 Cor 14:1–25 Pray for Dr. Herbert McGonigle & family
Saturday	Reading: Catch up Pray for Sigrid Nwator & family
Sunday 13th September	Reading 1 Cor 14:26–15:11 Pray for Myra O'Hara and family

Prayer requests:

- We pray for Vivienne Best's dad, Eric who is still in hospital and very poorly
- We remember John B, Chris H, Jon F, and Myra O, amongst others
- We pray for a positive way to move forward regarding safe gatherings at church in the coming months
- We pray for our families and friends who have special needs
- We think about the children, returning to school and those to university later this month
- At a national and local level, we pray for good leadership, balanced decisions, and we hope - guidance and wisdom 'from above'.
- We thank the Lord for many answers to prayer and his faithful providence.
- We pray for Tim & Alison celebrating their **Ruby Wedding Anniversary!**

Another warm welcome to our morning worship service. This month of September sees the nights drawing in and the weather changing, as per our seasons. It is also, generally speaking from a church point of view, the month to celebrate Harvest. Particularly, we emphasise our *'Thanksgiving'* for the harvest during this season

We will be making an emphasis on this harvest theme throughout the month but on a personal note, each of us long deeply to live a life that produces something that lasts. The truth is that many of us have been greatly impacted by the lives of others. This can go both ways; the impact could be good or not so good. I know which 'impact' my readers would like to leave or produce. Needless to say, our impact for good upon children is perhaps our deepest desire. It is something that cascades down the generations, with each of us, not least parents, wanting to bring something good and wholesome to pass on in each successive generation.

In these months leading up to my retirement, I have been thinking about the many people who have impacted the direction of my life, my early life as a follower of Christ and the many key people in positions of leadership I looked up to. It is also true that they, in turn, were also impacted greatly by their parents, leaders and forbears. Is not this what we find in the Bible too! Timothy was like a son to Paul and friendships were struck up that impacted whole regions of the Middle East and far beyond.

Perhaps some people might be tempted to think – 'I have not been able to impact many, or even *any*'. I guess we will never know our impact until that final day that is to come. From what I have said so far, we might be encouraged to live each day with the concept of a 'Harvest' in mind, knowing what the scriptures indicate – that if we sow good seed, good things will grow and flourish. *"Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary."* (Galatians 6:9)

Over the next two months we will be asking the Rev Michael Kane to come and preach a message to our church. Following this, a church members' meeting will be duly called, and a ballot taken, which if positive will confirm him as our next pastor. More details will be forthcoming in the next couple of weeks. Please pray for God's guidance, because the harvest of the years to come may greatly *depend upon your prayers* regarding this important decision for the right person at the right time.

Grace & Peace!



Message: 'The Lord of the Harvest'

Readings: Psalm 100; Matthew 9: 35-38

It was seven years ago that I had the opportunity to go on a sabbatical. I will never forget it. I met so many people and have many lovely memories. I think I told this story before, but here goes again! One of the royal naval chaplains I spent time with was Rev Tim Wilkinson, who was stationed at HMS SeaHawk, Culdrose. He was a lovely man, a Methodist minister who took really good care of me. There was a Fijian petty officer whose mother had died and he was given leave to go home for the funeral (it was going to cost £1500, which was a lot of money for him).

As we sat at a table, he told us the story of how, when he first came to live in England and saw his accommodation, he said **"Wow! Look at that!"** He was used to living back home in open flimsy buildings with tin roofs. He now had his own bed, running water, windows, even en-suite bathroom with shower . . .

In the village where he came from there were no cars, or any of the modern technology we have around us today. After he recovered from the initial shock of his surroundings he was now living in, he phoned home and told his friends and family what it was like to live here and they couldn't believe it. They thought he was so lucky! They said, **'Wow! You are living in paradise'**. And they envied him.

I can't remember his name, but he told us about his village beside the sea. He was living **everyday beside a sandy beach!** He told us that when you are hungry you go out and catch some fish and cook it fresh. Their climate is so pleasant and warm and, of course, there are no changing seasons. Because of this, you can grow your vegetables ALL YEAR ROUND with *lots* of harvests.

When you are hungry you go and catch fish, then you dig up some vegetables you are growing, and... When he told this to his fellow sailors on the base they said, **"Wow, Paradise!"**

Sometimes people are never happy; we always think the grass is greener elsewhere. That is part of the problem we must address these days because without knowing it, most of us are, in fact, ***blessed beyond measure!***

So yes, we want to do more, be better, produce more fruit in our faith – and yet when we count our many blessings, there is a contentment that inspires us to praise and worship the LORD our God.

Our passage this morning speaks about a Harvest all around us. So, I wanted to do exactly that – let's look around this story. **Firstly...**

1. Give Thanks

I was looking at the story immediately before reading this one in Matthew 9; actually, it is a double-barreled story of two blind men and a man who is demon possessed and couldn't speak. The blind men call to Jesus for help. Presumably 'the mute' was brought to Jesus by some faithful friends with one express purpose – for his healing.

It seems to me that the result in both stories was the same – ***they must have given thanks to God*** for what had transpired! When people experience ***that kind of transformation of circumstances***, they overflow with thanksgiving!

The two blind men had called out to Jesus saying, **'Son of David'**. They might have been **blind**, but they **could see** something others could not. They had come believing that there was something extra special about this stranger from Galilee - for Jesus said: ***"According to your faith will it be done to you"*** (Matt 9: 29). They were not disappointed.

I wonder if they thought of Psalm 100? It is entitled, ***'For Thanksgiving'. Shout for Joy! Worship the Lord with Gladness! Enter his gates with thanksgiving! For the Lord is good...***

Did you know that September is the month traditionally ***for giving thanks!*** It is the Harvest month. My two granddaughters love strawberries. Fortunately for them, we can buy them just about all year round now. Strawberries are available all year-round, but summer is their true season in Britain. Advances in breeding, transportation, and agricultural technologies keep us fed with berries all year, ***but*** summer's local crop is always the best! If you look around, there is a lot to Give Thanks to the Lord for. The people in this story were very grateful. Secondly...

2. Go and Tell

The passage which follows speaks of Jesus sending out the Twelve - and what ***a season*** of ministry they enjoyed.

In fact, the whole of chapter ten is taken up with this effort and its positive results. Once, when referring back to this mission Jesus asked, ***'When I sent you out did you lack anything?' No they replied, nothing!***

Does the Lord short-change *us* or leave *us* abandoned? Absolutely not. If we try to sum up what is happening here, you have the following in these three passages:

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Drawing people closer to God:
Loving, Growing, Serving



Sunday 6 September 2020 Pandemic-times Update

Brooklands Nazarene Church

25th Edition

The story of the blind men and the mute on one side; the story of the Twelve on a Mission on the other side, and right in the middle you have harvest ready for the reaping. It is an interesting sandwich that Matthew has put together.

The need is great, the workers are few and the potential harvest is 'plentiful'! I discovered a new name for our Heavenly Father in this passage, it is **'The Lord of the Harvest'**. The passage which follows is the answer to this prayer. The twelve are sent out. And if you read chapter ten you will find that three times (in vv. 26, 28 & 31) Jesus says to them **'not to be afraid'**.

It is probably worth mentioning too that most of chapter 11 is about John the Baptist. He is the Patriarch of the *prepare the way* for the 'Go and Tell' ones. Are **you** 'called' to go and tell? The passage containing Jesus' prayer to **'the Lord of the Harvest'** is sandwiched between a harvest of good things!

This is the Month of September. Traditionally it is a celebration of Harvest. With the devastating Pandemic we have gone through these past 25 weeks, there is nothing more needed by the whole world than a Harvest of good things and good news.

I think it all begins with a Harvest of Thanksgiving!

**'Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name'**

Let us come to the Lord's Table on this first Sunday of the month with an abundance of gratitude... after all, **'He is the Lord of the Harvest'**.