

HOON HAY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Welcome to this morning's service, the Third Sunday after Pentecost, 21st June

To those at home - we look forward to seeing you soon!

Morena, Hello Everyone,

It's the Winter solstice – the shortest day of the year! After today, but only very gradually, temperatures will rise and another Spring and then Summer will follow. This is also the Third Sunday after Pentecost and we continue reflecting on the person and ministry of the Holy Spirit. Today we explore the Fruits of the Spirit.

Although we are back on site for Sunday services, the online Order of Service including songs, prayers the message will continue for a short while. If you are watching via the website or Facebook page, please let friends and family know. It's been interesting during the lockdown to hear that there are folk throughout the country and even overseas who have been viewing our services. The wonders of modern technology!

Blessings, *Michael*



OUR APPROACH TO GOD IN PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

May we always have a love and reverence for your holy Name.

As we gather today, please help us still our hearts and minds to focus on worship.

For you never fail to help and govern those whom you have set upon the sure foundation of your loving kindness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Song: 'All Heaven Declares'



A beautiful rendition sung by Martin Ball with lyrics

PSALM
86:1-10, 16-17
(NRSV)

- ¹ Bow down your ear, O Lord, and answer me,
for I am poor and in misery.
- ² Keep watch over my life, for I am faithful;
save your servant who puts his trust in you.
- ³ Be merciful to me, O Lord, for you are my God;
I call upon you all the day long.
- ⁴ Gladden the soul of your servant,
for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.
- ⁵ For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving,
and great is your love toward all who call upon you.
- ⁶ Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer,
and attend to the voice of my supplications.
- ⁷ In the time of my trouble I will call upon you,
for you will answer me.
- ⁸ Among the gods there is none like you, O Lord,
nor anything like your works.
- ⁹ All nations you have made will come and worship you,
O Lord, and glorify your Name.
- ¹⁰ For you are great;
you do wondrous things;
and you alone are God.
- ¹⁶ Turn to me and have mercy upon me;
give your strength to your servant;
and save the child of your handmaid.
- ¹⁷ Show me a sign of your favor,
so that those who hate me may see it and be ashamed;
because you, O Lord, have helped me and comforted me.

 **Singing:** 'Be Thou my Vision' *The Celtic nature of this song is uplifting; the harmony of voices and instruments work together and glorify worship perfectly...*

‘The fruit of the Spirit is a gift from God, and only He can produce it. They who bear it know as little about it as the tree knows of its fruit. They know only the power of Him on whom their life depends.’

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906 - 1945)

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of our forefathers,

You have been the refuge of good and wise people in every generation. When history began, You were the first enlightener of minds, and Yours was the Spirit that first led them out of their lowly estate and made them human. Through all the ages You have been the Lord and giver of life, the source of all knowledge, the fountain of all goodness.

The patriarchs trusted You and were not put to shame:

The prophets sought You and You committed Your word to their lips:

The psalmists rejoiced in You and You were present in their songs:

The apostles waited upon You and they were filled with Your Holy Spirit:

The martyrs called upon You and You were with them in the midst of the flame:

Forbid it, Holy Lord, that we should fail to profit by these great memories of the ages that are gone by, or to enter into the glorious inheritance which You have prepared for us:

We confess our shortcomings; our sins known and unknown, intentional and of neglect. Thank You that You wash us clean;

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, by the power of the Holy Spirit, and to Your glory.

Amen

Hymn: 'Majesty' 

A hymn we are all familiar with.

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Almighty Father,

We come to you today grateful for the privilege of praying for others. We have been the recipient of others' prayers so often, and we understand how powerful intercessory prayer can be. Thank you that through your name, we can come boldly before you in prayer and with confidence, according to your will and know that you hear us.


We lift before you our neighbourhood and city...

We pray for teachers, for students, and for all in authority and leadership, both locally and throughout the world...

We pray for the lost, the hurting, the lonely, the sick, the bereaved, and those who are imprisoned—behind both visible and invisible walls...

So many needs, Lord, but you are adequate for every need. Your name is powerful, and your power is great. It's in your name that we pray and believe.

Amen

Hymn: Come thou fount of blessing 

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Scripture Readings (NIV)

Old Testament

Numbers 13: 17-25



Gospel

Matthew 7: 15-20



Epistle

Galatians 5: 16-26



Message: 'Fruit in Season': The Fruit of the Spirit



Time of Quiet

BENEDICTION

Doxology: 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow' 
Performed by Hillsong Worship featuring Brooke Ligertwood

And now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all.

Amen

NOTICES

If you are joining us at home, our online services will be less frequent after Sunday, 28 June 2020. We invite you to come and share in our services every Sunday at 10.00 am at 5 Downing Street, Hoon Hay, Christchurch. However, do continue to keep informed and connected by checking our [website](#), and on [Facebook](#). You are able to recap earlier messages on our YouTube [Channel](#).

'mainly music' starts again on the 30th of June. You may know a young family who would like to come and join in, if so, please contact the office for more information.

Please let the office know if you are celebrating a milestone or significant event. We want to share these with the church community.

Anne Edgar coordinates specific prayer requests. These can be passed to her via phone or email.

A very big thank you to all who are continuing with their tithes and offerings beyond the lockdown period. Please pray for our finances and if you need help with internet banking contact Shilo via the [office email](#). Our account number is Westpac 03-1594-0262669-00.

HELPFUL LINKS

Steady As You Go Exercises: Age Concern Canterbury has published some [exercises](#) to try at home, these are gentle exercises but please take care when practising them.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS: 'Fruit in Season': The Fruit of the Spirit

Today we are looking at the Fruit of the Spirit. One of the joys of creation is an abundance of fruit and produce in each different season. The shape, colour, texture, and of course, taste, are an expression of God's goodness and provision. Scripture teaches that we must tend our crops if they are to produce their best fruit. It's easy to focus on only the fruit without realising that there is always a tree, plant, or bush that has produced it. In our lives, the fruit may represent what we do, but what is producing our behaviour are attitudes and motivations of the heart and mind.

Fruit has both literal and metaphorical meanings, and we read of these in many different places. Here are a few references:

- The Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5 – one of our readings today)
- Fruit for God and fruit for death (Romans 7:4-5)
- Fruit of the lips, i.e. speech (Isaiah 57:19, Hebrews 13:15)
- Fruit unto holiness and life (Romans 6:22)
- Fruit of the wicked (Matthew 7:16 – our second reading)
- The fruit of self-centredness (Hosea 10:1)
- Fruit in season, i.e. true prosperity (Psalm 1:3, Jeremiah 17:8)
- Fruits of the gospel (Romans 1:13, Colossians 1:6)
- Fruit of righteousness (Philippians 1:11, James 3:18)
- Fruits demonstrating repentance (Matthew 3:8); and those not (Amos 6:12)
- The unfruitful works of darkness, compared with those of light (Ephesians 5:9-11), *and*,
- The Tree of Life with 12 kinds of fruit (Revelation 22:2), which symbolise abundant life in Christ (John 10:10)

So, one way or another, fruit is very important. When Moses sent 12 spies (one from each tribe) into Canaan, they were mostly very scared of giants (Anaks), and anxious about entering the land, even though it was promised to them. One sign of God's goodness was an enormous cluster of grapes; so large it had to be carried by two men on a pole! In spite of their fears and inadequacies, God was reminding them He would provide for His people. That is also true for us.

In our Gospel reading, Jesus speaks of our lives bearing fruit – either good or bad. He warns about false prophets who will eventually betray themselves; if not by their fruit/actions (which may fool people), then because of *who they are* (the 'tree' producing the 'fruit'). Such people are still evident today.

Our final reading from Galatians is probably familiar. Paul speaks of Fruit (singular) of the Spirit: i.e. the character qualities and virtues that manifest in a true follower of Jesus. These cannot be manufactured but are by-products of the Spirit's indwelling presence. We can never be 'good' enough to meet God's righteousness but being in Christ by the power of the Spirit – and only through this – we can and are declared righteous. Paul was critical of 'Judaisers' (an interesting term given his own background), who constantly try to live under law. This is not Spirit-led living. The really encouraging thing is that when we read the list of vices, not one of us truly measures-up; OK, we may avoid the 'big' sins, but what about heart attitudes and motivations? He speaks of a cosmic war being waged in the unseen realm contesting for our souls. No wonder we feel dragged down, and 'flat' at times! The only way to remain in Christ is to 'keep in step' with the Spirit (v.25), and we do this when we remain alert, have a soft heart towards God and others; are prayerful, keep connected, and stay accountable. The Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ is here to help.

Questions to ponder

1. Why is it so easy to drift into a legalistic faith?
2. In what areas do you think you could better 'keep in step' with the Holy Spirit?

PASTOR'S REFLECTION

The protests and riots in the US and other countries have led to debate here about colonial statues, war memorials, and even street names and memorial trees. The backlash against these features appears to be ramping up, and we may see another round of 'beheadings,' defacings, graffiti, and even removal. Debate about our past is always good; unilateral action in trumped-up rage to deface or destroy, is not. The thing about history is that the deeper we delve into it, the less pretty it looks. The so-called 'good old days' did not exist. Wherever we delve into the past we see people confronted with challenging issues and a mix of both good and bad times. It's only when we exercise *selective* memory and focus on positive memories that we see the past through rose-tinted spectacles. Please understand the point here: it is proper to recall the good times of the past, and we are emotional beings prone to nostalgia; but as has been said, 'nostalgia isn't what it used to be'. Very true!

When we consider the period of colonial settlement (1840-1890) our earlier history books made much of governors, monarchs, and war heroes. The voices of others, including Māori, were mostly absent or presented in a patronising manner. After their deaths, these people often 'took to stone' and permanent memorials were set up in marble or cast bronze. While we can now appreciate that this is an unbalanced portrayal of what actually happened (and these people had their foibles and short-comings, just like anyone else) we also need to remember the positive aspects of their lives. And, they lived in different times. Rightly or wrongly our forebears saw fit to remember them and their exploits. Most people acknowledge and agree with the ANZAC tradition; it's not 'glorifying war' as critics may claim, but a sober reminder of sacrifice and the loss of life. Every generation needs to learn from this.

In history those who actually or figuratively 'smash' statues or myths are called *iconoclasts*. Even in the church, at the second Council of Nicaea in 787 AD, for example, there was heated debate about the role of statues in worship, and while Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox churches continued to embrace icons (and still do), others did not, and the Reformers of the 16th century spoke out strongly against them. This is why protesting – or *Protestant* – churches generally (but not exclusively) reject icons. In the Old Testament monuments were sometimes set-up to remember God's faithful provision, and they were to remain for future generations to understand and express gratitude to God. However, statues of worship to pagan gods were expressly condemned.

Remembering is an important part of being human, and any monument to the past should lead us to learn about the person, event, or object for ourselves. If a colonial figure who has been memorialised in stone or bronze was less honourable than previous generations understood, I favour the addition of a new plaque which is carefully worded to convey subsequent information. This would ensure balance without blaming or dismissing the judgements of previous generations.

Have a good week – keep in touch and stay safe.

Michael