

Our song continued ...

Lord let me care, care more and more
Care for those who feel the loneliness, for those who have no say
Care for friends who have no job and find it hard to face the day
Care for those with whom we sing and work and pray
And in care, Jesus Christ will be found. Lord let me care.

Lord let me learn, learn more and more
Learn that what I know is just a speck of what there is to know
Learn from listening to my neighbour when I'd rather speak and go
Learn that as we live in faith and trust we grow
learn to see, hear and care, with our Lord. Lord let me learn.

Lord let me love, love more and more
Love the loveless and the fragile, help them be what they can be
Love the way that I would like them to be looking after me
For to know you is to love them and be free
And in love Jesus Christ will be found. Lord let me love.

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Closing Prayer

Lord, make my heart fertile ground so that
the world will see what a difference you
make in my life. I commit myself to showing
that all people matter, even when it costs me.



I will remember that you promised to always be with me and that you
have paid the ultimate price to freely give us love and grace. My
response will be, "O Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end;
Lord, be for ever near me, my Master and my Friend". Amen.

With thanks to Carolyn Sharp for preparing today's reflection



Church in a Bag
12 July 2020
Dubbo Uniting Church



A Gathering

We come together today, standing on holy ground; for wherever we
meet Christ, there we will find holy ground.

From Psalm 119: 105-112 (The Message)

*By your words I can see where I'm going;
they throw a beam of light on my dark
path.*

*I've committed myself and I'll never turn
back from living by your righteous order.*



Preparation

Even when things do not go to plan and the way ahead seems difficult,
there is a way forward when we use the light of God to show our path.

When everything is changing and we mourn for the old days, help us to
see the possibilities that are opening to us.

When we see the new options that are available, encourage us to give
them due consideration instead of automatically discarding them.

Give us fresh courage and enthusiasm to try something new and
different, even when we don't know what the outcome will be.

Let us put our hand into the hand of God and step forward in faith.



Reading: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

It would be a game person who boldly declares “I have never broken any law, not even the spirit of any law!”. For I suspect that if we are truthful, we would all drop our heads and mumble “I am not perfect, not even close”. It may not have been intentional or may be “only just” over the line, but Jesus doesn’t say “A little bit is OK if you didn’t mean any harm”.



Rather, Jesus confronts our attitudes and asks us “Are you prepared to change your ways? I accept you as you are but I am interested in what happens from now on. Think carefully, for whatever you choose, it **will** cost you in some way. Either way you will give up one thing but gain another”.

Usually when we look at the Parable of the Sower, we think of the ground that receives the seed as being unchangeable – it is what it is and that’s that. After all, how can rocky ground become fertile? It may take time, but in nature it does happen. As rock is eroded the minerals it contains are released to become available for use by plants and animals.

What about the soil with weeds? Our front lawn has some weedy patches. We have dug some out, but we are also taking some Buffalo runners from a good section of lawn and are tending them in the weedy area to enable them to push out the weeds. Once again, not a quick process and it does take some work, but we are slowly changing what is growing.

Now we come to the hard ground – the road. Surely this won’t produce growth! Have you ever walked along a road and seen plants growing in every crack, even on a well-used road? Have you looked at a railway line that has been closed or at an abandoned building to see just how quickly new life can spring up? Each of these processes take time and energy but show that change is possible. It all depends on whether you are prepared to put in the work to make the change happen.

And when change is made, suddenly the only outcome becomes one of many possible outcomes. Will we sit back and take the easy way out or are we motivated to see if there is a better way? When we see injustice, are we challenged to do more than say “Oh, that’s not good”.

We are made in God’s image but we are also made with free will – to choose what we will do. We are made in human frailty with a splash of the divine – and given the choice of what we will do.

COVID-19 has given us a once in a lifetime opportunity to take time out and look at what we want for the church’s future. As we climb out of the rut of “we’ve always done it that way” and accept the challenge of new experiences, let’s take an honest look at how we want to represent Jesus in our community as we move forward. What is good and to be kept, what does not help and needs to be left behind and what has elements that can be improved?

What kind of ground will we choose to be: hard, rocky, weedy or fertile? All things are possible in God’s time, and in God’s love and grace.



A song to sing or to read: Lord Let Me See (TiS 681)

Lord let me see, see more and more
See the beauty of a person, not the colour of the skin
See the faces of the homeless with no-one to take them in
See discouragement because she'll never win
See the face of our Lord in the pain. Lord let me see.

Lord let me hear, hear more and more
Hear the sounds of great rejoicing, hear a person barely sigh
Hear the ring of truth, and hollowness of those who live a lie
Hear the wail of starving people who will die
Hear the voice of our Lord in the cry. Lord let me hear.