

+ Crowe Hill + Fordingbridge + Horton Heath + Ringwood +

## Sunday Service 12<sup>th</sup> July 2020

### Welcome to this Sunday's Service

#### Lectionary Texts:

Isaiah 55:10–13 Psalm 65:1–13 Romans 8:1–11 Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23

#### Theme: 'Four soils for sowing'

*I have preached most of this sermon before in 2014 at Ringwood and at Crowe Hill. So some of you might remember it? Everything else is freshly compiled for today. The lectionary texts inspire us to think about the natural world around us. Jesus' farming parable about the seeds and the soils uses this natural theme to challenge us about our ability to respond his message about the kingdom of heaven.*

#### Keeping in Touch

It is good to continue to hear favourable responses to these weekly services, your thanks are appreciated.

For those with internet connection, who are trying out a wealth of resources, can I also point you in the direction of the Christchurch and Wimborne Methodist Circuit [www.candwmc.org.uk](http://www.candwmc.org.uk) where a variety of local printed or video resources are being posted for every Sunday.

People are still asking: 'When will we get back to church?' The leadership in each church is discussing the possibilities. However, whilst plans and preparations continue to be made, now that many more people feel free and comfortable about getting out and about, why not take the opportunity to arrange a socially distanced meeting with a friend or two from the church, perhaps in your garden, or on a walk, or in a coffee bar.

Those of you who receive paper printed copies have been sent two services today. Mike and Louise are taking annual leave next week. The email version will come out as normal.

#### Call to Worship

"Seek the Lord while he may be found,  
Call on him while he is near." Isaiah 55:6

# Hymn: Gather us in (CG 38)

<https://youtu.be/ar0BXa82F9M>

1. Here in this place new light is streaming,  
Now is the darkness vanished away,  
See in this space our fears and our  
dreamings,  
Brought here to you in the light of this day.  
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken,  
Gather us in, the blind and the lame;  
Call to us now, and we shall awaken,  
We shall arise at the sound of our name.

2. We are the young our lives are a myst'ry  
We are the old who yearn for your face,  
We have been sung throughout all of  
hist'ry,  
Called to be light to the whole human race.  
Gather us in, the rich and the haughty,  
Gather us in, the proud and the strong;  
Give us a heart so meek and so lowly,  
Give us the courage to enter the song.

3. Here we will take the wine and the  
water,

Here we will take the bread of new birth,  
Here you shall call your sons and your  
daughters,  
Call us anew to be salt for the earth.  
Give us to drink the wine of compassion,  
Give us to eat the bread that is you;  
Nourish us well, and teach us to fashion  
Lives that are holy and hearts that are true.

4. Not in the dark of buildings confining,  
Not in some heaven, light-years away,  
But here in this place the new light is  
shining,  
Now is the Kingdom, now is the day.  
Gather us in, and hold us forever,  
Gather us in, and make us your own;  
Gather us in, all peoples together,  
Fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

Words: Marty Haugen

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Calamus

## Litany of Praise and Prayer Poem

Jesus, Lord of the Earth

**By you all things were created**

All creeping things, all flying things,  
All living things, all dying things,  
The highest hills, the deepest seas,  
The strongest gale, the slightest breeze,  
The blossom on a cherry tree,  
A spinning spider's artistry,  
The smell of dry earth after rain,  
Each cell within a human brain,  
Each fallen leaf, each towering pine,  
Reveals your intricate design.  
Creator Lord, we stand amazed,  
And for your earth, we give you praise:

Jesus, Lord of the Earth

**For you all things were created**

The smoothest pebble on the shore,  
Detritus on the forest floor,  
The undiscovered depths of space,  
The wrinkles on a baby's face;  
Each sparrow and each human hair  
Is numbered and is in your care,  
All iron and oil and diamonds too,  
Whilst used by us, belong to you,  
Forgive us Lord, for we forget,  
All things are yours, and yet,  
Provider Lord, we stand amazed,

And with your earth, we give you praise:

Jesus, Lord of the Earth

**In you all things now hold together**

All of earth's greatest mysteries,  
And all our personal histories,  
Each planet and each grain of sand,  
You hold them in your nail-scarred hands,  
You feed the birds and clothe the flowers,  
You warm the soil and send the showers,  
You sound the rhythms of the earth,  
Of tides and seasons, death and birth,  
It is for you creation sings,  
The head, the centre of all things,  
Sustainer Lord, we stand amazed,  
And with your earth, we give you praise:

Jesus, Lord of the earth

**In you all things are made new**

Lord God before all time began,  
Yet you became a Son of Man,  
You stepped into the world you made,  
A world once good, now spoilt, decayed,  
As Son of Man your death reversed  
The chaos of creation's curse,  
The earth itself quaked on that day,  
Released from bondage to decay,  
All things are reconciled to you,  
Creation's hope is born anew.  
Redeemer Lord, we stand amazed  
And with your earth, we give you praise.

Jesus, Lord of the earth

**By you all things were created,  
For you all things were created,  
In you all things now hold together,  
In you all things are made new.  
And all creation cries Amen!**

Words: Dave Bookless

**Hymn:** For the fruits of all creation (STF 124, R+S 42, SOF 3/1234)

<https://youtu.be/ehBt4yONaao>

1. For the fruits of all creation,  
thanks be to God;  
for his gifts to every nation,  
thanks be to God;  
for the ploughing, sowing, reaping,  
silent growth while we are sleeping,  
future needs in earth's safe-keeping,  
thanks be to God.

2. In the just reward of labour,  
God's will is done;  
in the help we give our neighbour,  
God's will is done;  
in our world-wide task of caring

for the hungry and despairing,  
in the harvests we are sharing,  
God's will is done.

3. For the harvests of the Spirit,  
thanks be to God;  
for the good we all inherit,  
thanks be to God;  
for the wonders that astound us,  
for the truths that still confound us,  
most of all, that love has found us,  
thanks be to God.

Words: Fred Pratt Green (1903-2000)

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## Prayer for Understanding

Prepare our hearts like good soil to receive the seed of your Word for us today. Silence in us any inner turmoil, so that we may hear your Word and allow it to grow in us today. **Amen.**

## Bible Reading: Isaiah 55:10-13 (ESV)

- <sup>10</sup> “For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven  
and do not return there but water the earth,  
making it bring forth and sprout,  
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,  
<sup>11</sup> so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;  
it shall not return to me empty,  
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,  
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.
- <sup>12</sup> “For you shall go out in joy  
and be led forth in peace;  
the mountains and the hills before you  
shall break forth into singing,  
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
- <sup>13</sup> Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;  
instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle;  
and it shall make a name for the LORD,  
an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.”

## Bible Reading: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23 (ESV)

**13** That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. <sup>2</sup> And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. <sup>3</sup> And he told them many things in parables, saying: “A sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup> And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. <sup>5</sup> Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, <sup>6</sup> but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. <sup>7</sup> Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. <sup>8</sup> Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. <sup>9</sup> He who has ears, let him hear.”

<sup>18</sup> “Hear then the parable of the sower: <sup>19</sup> When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. <sup>20</sup> As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, <sup>21</sup> yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. <sup>22</sup> As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the

word, and it proves unfruitful. <sup>23</sup> As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

## Hymn: Speak O Lord (SOF 4/2032)

<https://youtu.be/ubRIJj8xkds>

1. Speak, O Lord, as we come to You  
To receive the food of Your holy word.  
Take Your truth, plant it deep in us;  
Shape and fashion us in Your likeness,  
That the light of Christ might be seen today  
In our acts of love and our deeds of faith.  
Speak, O Lord, and fulfil in us  
All Your purposes, for Your glory.

2. Teach us, Lord, full obedience,  
Holy reverence, true humility.  
Test our thoughts and our attitudes  
In the radiance of Your purity.  
Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to  
see

Your majestic love and authority.  
Words of power that can never fail;  
Let their truth prevail over unbelief.

3. Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds;  
Help us grasp the heights of Your plans for  
us.  
Truths unchanged from the dawn of time  
That will echo down through eternity.  
And by grace we'll stand on Your promises,  
And by faith we'll walk as You walk with us.  
Speak, O Lord, till Your church is built  
As the earth is filled with Your glory.

Words: Keith Getty & Stuart Townend  
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## Sermon: 'Preparing a good soil'

### Introduction

When I taught at the Countryside Education Trust we occasionally played the “Make a Soil (Bash a Bag)” game with visiting children. Most children are taught that soil is made up of two things: the eroding fragments from the bedrock underneath, combined with the decaying organic matter from the plants and animals above. So we would give the children a small hessian sack, and a pile of New Forest sand and gravel, and a pile of dead brown leaves. The children would take a couple of handfuls of sand and gravel and dead leaves and put them in their sacks, and then we would encourage them to mix these ingredients together and pound the fragments down smaller and smaller. But no matter how hard they bashed, or how long we gave them, surprise, surprise, when they looked inside their sacks it still looked like a mix of gravel and broken brown leaves, and never looked like the dark brown rich forest soil all around them!

The objective of the game was to get the children to appreciate how hard it is to make soil. And therefore to appreciate how precious good soil is. And to value and preserve the good soil we have. And to understand the essential role the worms and the fungi and bacteria and the myriad of minibeasts have in making good soil for us.

## **The Parable**

Turning to the parable. I would like to begin with three surprising things about the parable which Jesus told. Three important things which would have seemed strange and significant to the people who first heard Jesus tell this story.

**Surprise One** - The poor farmland - Why does a farmer own such a collection of poor land anyway? Small fields, riddled with patches of rocks and stones, criss-crossed by other people's paths, weedy round the edges with thistles and brambles. Why hasn't it all been improved? This sounds like the farm land of a poor peasant farmer, perhaps an illegal occupier of someone else's fringe land. This isn't the rich, productive land of a flat and fertile lowland farmer. Jesus is describing a poor farmer, struggling to make a living on poor land.

**Surprise Two** - The profligate sower - The agricultural growers who first heard Jesus' story would have been surprised at this farmer who scatters seed everywhere, even on the path and the rocks and the weed patches. Surely a poor farmer who hand sows all his precious expensive seed could distribute it better than that? But no, in this parable there seems to be an abundance of seed.

**Surprise Three** - The prodigious harvest - The 'good news' ending of this parable story is the prodigious yield the 100, 60 or 30 times formula. It was unheard of in the days of Jesus for such a yield to be achieved when sowing their main crops of wheat or barley. It was a miraculous conclusion to the story. So no matter what you thought about the poor growing conditions and the apparently wasted seed, it doesn't matter, in the end the result exceeds anybody's possible expectation. It all turns out wonderfully well at the end.

## **Guerrilla Gardening**

Today, in modern times, particularly in urban city centre re-development settings there is a culture of Guerrilla Gardening - to claim and cultivate spare land that you don't own but which some developer or council is holding on to, awaiting some grand future development scheme. If the gardener doesn't own a garden or an allotment, they invade the vacant plot and quickly plant up their own allotment on the un-developed land. The guerrilla gardener can get in a year or two or more of crops, and can enjoy making barren land productive, and even beautiful if they plant flowers. But often they have to clear away lots of rubbish and debris to prepare the seed beds in the first place. Perhaps the farmer in Jesus' story is similarly landless, growing his crops on the relatively unproductive margins of other people's land. Is Jesus saying that he can only sow his Word where he is able, where he can get in on the fringes? Perhaps there are other fields where Jesus the farmer cannot even sow his seed at all.

## **Prior Preparation**

We know that in reality a farmer sows his seed, not on unprepared soil, but on prepared land. Jesus begins his parable well through the annual cycle of the farming year. Any farmer or gardener knows that before seed can be sown, the soil has to be adequately prepared.

The earth has to be tilled. Rocks and other debris must be removed. Manure or compost or modern fertiliser must be added. It must be regularly weeded, and hoed to disturb the weed seeds. Finally, the planter must know when the conditions are optimum for sowing. If it's too dry, the seeds will not germinate; too wet they will simply rot in the ground. The farmers Jesus knew of would wait for the seasonal rains to come before sowing.

### **Explanation and Meaning**

In explaining his parable Jesus makes it clear that the seeds sown, representative of the good news about the kingdom of heaven, will meet one of four possible outcomes, each symbolic of a human state as common today as it was two thousand years ago. Some hearers, like the well-trodden path, harden their hearts to the gospel, thus exposing its life and energy to hungry scavengers who are ready to use it for their own purposes. Others utilize the Word as a quick-fix for their psychological woes, seeing it only as the latest in a long line of soul drugs. When the euphoric feelings fade, they are quick to move on to something else. Another group allows the pursuit of wealth and material goods to extinguish the truth of what they hear so that their own avaricious ends can be served.

A fourth group, however, is ready to welcome the seed and nourish it in the depths of their souls, eventually producing a harvest of thirty, or sixty, or a hundredfold (Matt. 13:8). These are the hearts that are prepared to receive the Word and allow it to nourish every aspect of their lives, from the inner workings of their spirit to the very movements of their bodies. Naturally, this would have been the soil that the sower had spent his time cultivating, and it is in this discipline – tilling and keeping – that we can find a source of inspiration for our own spiritual lives. How, for example, might preparing soil for planting be likened to the cultivation of our souls for the reception of the gospel? Conversely, how is it that the neglect of our "soil" – allowing the world to trample over us, for example, until we become some lifeless thoroughfare where nothing can take root – can serve as a metaphor for the abandonment of our spiritual well-being? Jesus certainly chose his allusions carefully, knowing full well that "those who had ears to hear" would take away much more from his parable than they bargained for.

### **How to hear the parable**

There are two ways to hear this parable. The first way is to ask: 'Does it describe how we first heard the good news about Jesus and the kingdom of heaven?' Is it a description of each person's response to the offer of salvation? If you only read it like that, then in later years, the mature Christian might think that this parable has nothing to say to them. But the second way of reading remembers that good and receptive soil only stays as good soil because the farmer keeps it good. New doses of fertiliser must be applied each year, hard compacted ground must be broken up, weeds must constantly be removed, digging or ploughing keeps bringing stones up to the surface and they must also be removed. Thomas Merton, the Trappist monk writes:

“Every moment and every event of every person’s life on earth plants something in her or his soul. For just as the wind carries thousands of winged seeds, so each moment brings with it germs of spiritual vitality that come to rest imperceptibly in the minds and wills of men and women. Most of these unnumbered seeds perish and are lost, for such seeds as these cannot spring up anywhere except in the good soil of freedom, spontaneity and love.”

The traditional farmer’s saying puts it like this:

Four seeds in a hole,  
one for the mouse,  
one for the crow,  
one to rot  
and one to grow.

There is always a need for plenty of seed to be sown, for the good growing conditions are always in short supply. And our God is a generous sower. But does the generously sown seed meet with a receptive good soil? What can we do to improve the soil of our lives?

### **A Reality Check**

The actual soil on Earth also reflects the state of our hearts. As our hearts have become selfish and stony, so has our soil. Many people are familiar with the devastating Dust Bowl of the 1930’s, created when unsustainable farming practices met with drought. In a rush to achieve the highest yield and highest profit, destructive techniques (such as overgrazing , over-tilling, and monocropping ) depleted the soil and transformed a fertile, fruit-bearing land into a barren desert and famine.

Our hearts are still unwilling to deny ourselves fast food in order to give the soil time to regenerate. Our world is losing arable topsoil. A 2014 United Nations report explains that we are losing 30 soccer fields of soil every minute, mostly due to unsustainable intensive farming practices. If this rate continues, all of the world’s farmable soil could be gone within 60 years. How then could we perform Jesus’ command to feed the hungry?

Though this problem of land degradation is global, it is more pronounced in developing countries, such as Africa and Asia, where people are most dependent on local food production from marginal land for their survival. The Sahel region of Africa in particular is losing a battle against desertification, where the Sahara is expanding and overtaking land currently used to feed villagers. This has major consequences for the residents there, as well as for Christian charities serving those communities.

The destruction of our soils comes not from need, but from ignorance, apathy, and greed. While weather variations contribute to soil loss, the primary force degrading our land is mismanagement— not mismanagement from ignorance alone, but by consistently choosing short-term selfish gains over long-term productivity. It is possible with specialized knowledge and care to produce abundant food, more than enough for our population, without depleting the earth.

We do not need to overgraze fields with livestock, but we do so to fill our culture's gluttonous appetite for meat-filled meals every day. We don't need to deplete the nutrients from our farmlands through monocropping, but we do in order to make harvest more immediately convenient and inexpensive. We do not need to accelerate climate change (and thus desert-expansion) by burning excessive fossil fuels, but we demand the comforts of massive energy consumption. In short, it is as Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew says: 'Pollution is in essence a problem of the heart.'

As we have neglected our role as stewards of creation, the earth is showing us a symbol of our stony hearts. The soil like our hearts, fails, refusing to produce food at all. In our modern world, we are still re-enacting the consequences of our first sin in Eden: "Cursed is the ground because of you... it will bring forth thorns and thistles" (Genesis 3:17). We must look at the most humble of God's creation—the dirt we trample daily—to learn about our spiritual growth and our ethical obligation to our neighbours. We must remember that we are also dust (Genesis 2:7, Psalm 103:14), and so the dust will teach us to be who we are meant to be.

### **Spiritual Preparation – Becoming good soil**

What are we doing to keep on renewing the quality of the good soil that we ought to be? What makes us receptive? I have thought of eight possible short answers to that question:

1. I would point to the value of a life which has made room for prayer and meditation and Bible study – listening for the word at all times.
2. Christian fellowship and accountability, who do you meet with and have fellowship with? Are there people who can act as an inspiration and a challenge to us? Helping us to hear and respond.
3. Acts of service, keeping in practice, being ready to serve. When an invitation from God to serve comes your way, are you ready to respond?
4. Training and skills – in which ways have you prepared yourself to respond? How often do you turn God down saying 'I couldn't do that, I'm not trained to do it.'
5. Living an uncluttered and simple life – there should be room in your life and in your diary to hear and respond.
6. Financial simplicity – no debts, no heavy expenditures, no chasing after the next pound (£), to be free of your own financial worries, making it more likely you can share the worries of others.
7. Ready and willing – but not perfect, don't put off hearing and responding. Don't say 'I'm not ready yet.' No farmer or gardener would ever say they have a perfect soil, but they make the most of what they have got. And, in this parable, it is God who sows and God who make it grow, and the result, with God is miraculous. So just say 'Yes.'
8. Empathy – you know your soil is a work-in-progress – you know all about the rocks and weeds and hard places in your life, and you are trying to deal with them right now. This makes you perfectly suited to help others in their struggle too. Empathy -

one soil in the making assisting another soil in the making. The way you are handling your soil can be a blessing and an example to others right now. So go for growth now.

## Conclusion

The Sower is still generously sowing and planting seeds, and many of these are still landing in the same time-worn places: the hardened path, the stony ground, the weed-infested earth. Thankfully, some are still able to find the right soil. It is our good fortune that this same Sower also provides the nourishment that will help these seeds to grow; as the Psalmist says, "You visit the earth and water it, you greatly enrich it" (65:9a). But the work does not lie solely with the Creator, for what is cast must ultimately find its own rich, dark earth. And as any gardener knows, seeds can grow well only when a commitment has been made to listening, and labouring, and tilling, and weeding, and weeding, and weeding. Seeds can bear abundant fruit only when a commitment has been made to preparing a proper place for them.

"Whoever has ears, let them hear."

## Song: Lord let my heart be good soil

*I didn't know this little song. But I found it a very moving and powerful prayer. YouTube shows that this is very popular with Christians in the far East! I particularly liked this effective guitar accompaniment:*

[https://youtu.be/\\_9VuPiORRaM](https://youtu.be/_9VuPiORRaM)

Lord, let my heart be good soil,  
open to the seed of your word.  
Lord, let my heart be good soil,  
where love can grow and peace is understood.  
When my heart is hard, break the stone away.  
When my heart is cold, warm it with the day.  
When my heart is lost, lead me on your way.  
Lord, let my heart... Lord, let my heart...  
Lord, let my heart be good soil.

Handt Hanson

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## Prayers

### A Good Soil Prayer

King of Heaven and Earth, we thank You for good soil  
For the reminder that even the dirt beneath our feet bore the imprint of Your resurrection,  
And that even the smallest creature is loved by You.  
Father, bless these worms that proclaim Your glory,  
The bacteria, fungus, and insects that do Your work.

Bless the soil they create, that it may nourish Your people  
And restore Your earth that we have degraded by our sin.  
Teach our hearts also to be fertile soil for Your Word,  
And bless us with the abundance of Your love,  
With fruits of the earth, with seasonable weather, and with great love for each other.  
**Amen.**

#### **A Prayer that I would be good soil**

Father, I pray that You will help my heart and mind become good soil in which Your Word can be sown.

I pray I would be one who hears, grasping and comprehending Your Word.

I pray I become a doer of Your Word, living out Your will for my life.

I pray I would be the one who bears a hundred times the amount that was sown.

Father, let the fruit within my life be a testimony of Your goodness!

Let my life glorify you!

In Jesus name, **Amen**

#### **A Prayer for ourselves and for others**

Prepare our hearts like good soil so that we will hear Your word with an honest and good heart.

May Your Word land on softened soil, soil that is ready to be embraced and worked during the week even in the midst of trials and testing.

May we bear fruit for the world to see and others come to know You.

Lord, just as we have prayed for others, we also pray the same for ourselves.

Protect us all from the enemy stealing away any of Your Word that You desire to take root in our lives.

Help us to not hear your Word with a happy face only to be battered and torn down the rest of the week because we have not sought to stay near the stream of living water.

Help us not to be trapped in the cares of this world and lose sight of the one true and living God who controls all things.

Father may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, **Amen**

#### **A Prayer for planet earth and its soil**

Most gracious God, we come before you to pray for the wellbeing of the planet.

You alone know the full extent of the destruction we have wrought to your beautiful handiwork, and what needs to be done to remedy it.

We pray for the people around the globe who suffer because of environmental damage.

We pray for the defenceless creatures harmed or made extinct by our selfishness and ignorance.

We pray for the oceans, air, mountains, plants, and soil, that life and health may again pulse in them.

We pray that we humans have a change of heart and stop harming the planet.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us that we may have the passion and wisdom to work effectively to restore your creation.  
Guide us in our personal, church, and community efforts.  
Give us strength to continue on with this work when it is difficult and requires sacrifice.  
Bless the Earth and all its life in every way. **Amen**

## Hymn: From the breaking of the dawn (SOF 4/1774, STF 156)

<https://youtu.be/ODpSIIiWkEM>

1. From the breaking of the dawn  
To the setting of the sun,  
I will stand on every promise of Your word.  
Words of power, strong to save,  
That will never pass away;  
I will stand on every promise of Your word.  
For Your covenant is sure,  
And on this I am secure:  
I can stand on every promise of Your word.

2. When I stumble and I sin,  
Condemnation pressing in,  
I will stand on every promise of Your word.  
You are faithful to forgive,  
That in freedom I might live,  
So I stand on every promise of Your word.  
Guilt to innocence restored;  
You remember sins no more,  
So I'll stand on every promise of Your word.

3. When I'm faced with anguished choice  
I will listen for Your voice,

And I'll stand on every promise of Your word.  
Through this dark and troubled land  
You will guide me with Your hand  
As I stand on every promise of Your word.  
And You've promised to complete  
Every work begun in me,  
So I'll stand on every promise of Your word.

4. Hope that lifts me from despair,  
Love that casts out every fear  
As I stand on every promise of Your word.  
Not forsaken, not alone,  
For the Comforter has come,  
And I stand on every promise of Your word.  
Grace sufficient, grace for me,  
Grace for all who will believe;  
We will stand on every promise of Your word.

Words: Keith Getty & Stuart Townend  
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## Blessing

May the Lord pour out his blessing upon you  
Like rain on dry and thirsty ground.  
May the blessing of God enrich you  
Like fertile soil ready for growth. **Amen.**