



Based on the gospel for Sunday 12 July – Matthew 13: 1-23

“He who has no root in him, he does not last.”

Today's gospel allegory of the seed sown on parched earth, or amongst choking thorns, must ring a grim bell for those whose livelihoods are at risk during the pandemic. One could think especially of poor farmers in countries worst hit by climate change, now enduring a double crisis.

How do you believe in the good news, when things are so dark? Yet poor farmers were exactly the kind of people to whom Jesus's parables were addressed. He was close to their suffering.

With his parables (Greek root para-bola: thrown alongside) Jesus throws himself alongside us and guides our heavy feet.

It may be tempting for us to view our lives as unfruitful soil, especially at a time where we could be stranded without work or occupation. Many challenges lie ahead.

But let us remember the Sabbath, a word that means to 'cease'. We were given the seventh day as a memorial of when God ceases work and rests after the work of Creation. In the Old Testament, every seventh year is to be kept as a Sabbath. The land lies fallow, and the balance of the earth is restored, while any fruits that grow are left for the poor to gather.

While we may be worried about the future, let us also try to see what good things could bear fruit in the fallow stretches of our lives.

Jesus, you invite us to have eyes to see and ears to hear your truth. Help us to resist the thorns that grow up and choke the word of the Kingdom. Amen.



## Coronavirus prayers

Keep everyone affected by coronavirus in your prayers at this time.

Let us pray



## Summer of Hope

Take part in our Summer of Hope and help vulnerable families around the world survive coronavirus.

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## Unite against coronavirus

We are living through the biggest public health crisis in a century. We need to unite in love and compassion.

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This reflection and prayer were written by Francis Stewart of our Theology Team.

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