

Sermon – 08.02.26 Readings: Romans 8:18–25 & Matthew 6:25–end

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of all our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our strength and our redeemer. Amen.

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life...”

If I’m honest, that line from Jesus can sometimes feel like one of the harder ones to hear. Not because it isn’t beautiful - it is very beautiful - but because it can sound so far removed from the lived reality of our days.

We worry about our families. We worry about our health.

We worry about money, about the future, about the state of the world, about what we can and cannot control.

And many of us carry worries quietly, faithfully, without fuss - but heavily.

So when Jesus says, “Do not worry,” it isn’t a telling off.

It’s not a denial of reality. It’s an invitation - an invitation to trust that even here, even now, God is holding us.

That sense of *living in the middle* runs through both of our readings today.

In Romans, Paul speaks of creation itself “groaning,” as if the whole world is straining, waiting, longing for something more. It’s a powerful image - not of despair or of ending, but of labour and of beginning. The groans are not the sound of death, but of birth.

Paul doesn’t pretend that suffering isn’t real. He doesn’t minimise pain or hardship. Instead, he places it within a bigger story - a story of hope, still unfolding.

“We wait for it with patience,” he says. Not because it’s easy. But because God is faithful.

And then we turn to Matthew’s Gospel, where Jesus draws our attention to the everyday - birds in the air, flowers in the field, the quiet, faithful rhythms of creation.

Look, he says. Notice. Pay attention.

This is not escapism. It’s grounding.

In our rural village setting, many of us know these rhythms well. We notice the seasons turning. We know that growth takes time. We understand that much of life happens beneath the surface, unseen for a long while.

Jesus is not saying that life will be free from trouble. He is saying that worry does not have the final word.

“Can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?” Well if I could, with all the worrying I do – I would add years, decades onto my life!

We worry because it feels like we are doing something - but often it only exhausts us.

Trust, by contrast, feels passive - but it is deeply active.

It is a choice, made again and again, to place ourselves into God’s care.

And this is where these readings meet the table we gather around today.

Because Holy Communion is not about escaping the world’s pain. It is about meeting God *within it*. I often feel that when I presiding at the Eucharist – the space is so thin – I could almost reach out and touch God. It is where I feel most closest to him. I felt that even before standing behind the alter, before wearing a strip of plastic around my neck! – I felt it when I knelt and kneel at the rial.

For we bring ourselves as we are to the rail - our anxieties, our longings, our griefs, our hopes. We bring the groaning of our own hearts, and the groaning of the world. And we place them into God’s hands.

Bread is taken. Bread is blessed. Bread is broken.

Life, too, is often like that.

In life things happen, things go well, things get broken.....and then every now and then - the bread is shared. And in the sharing, there is nourishment. In the breaking, there is grace.

Paul reminds us that hope, by its nature, is something we cannot yet see. because if we could see it fully, it wouldn’t be hope.

Hope is not optimism. It is not pretending everything will be fine. Hope is trusting that God is at work, even when the picture is incomplete.

Jesus says, "Seek first the kingdom of God." Not as another thing to worry about or add to our to-do list - but as a redirection of the heart.

The kingdom of God is not somewhere else. It is not only in the future. It is glimpsed whenever we choose trust over fear, generosity over anxiety, presence over panic. When we care for one another. When we notice beauty. When we refuse to let worry harden us.

And sometimes, seeking the kingdom looks very small indeed: taking a walk, sharing a meal, sitting quietly in prayer, asking for help, resting when rest is needed.

Today, as we come to the altar, we are reminded that we are not self-sufficient. We are dependent - and that is not a failure. It is part of being human.

God knows what we need.

God knows the worries we carry.

God meets us, not with judgement, but with mercy.

So perhaps Jesus' words today are not a command, but a comfort:

You are seen.

You are known.

You are held.

Even now. Especially now.

And as we receive bread and wine, may we be strengthened not just for today, but for the waiting - trusting that the God who feeds us will not abandon the work of his hands.

Amen.