



**BIBLE STUDY for the
TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**



Focus Text: Judges 4: 1 - 7

Additional texts: Psalm 23; 1 Thessalonians 5: 1 - 11; Matthew 25: 14 - 30

In our focus text, Judges 4:1-7, we see that the people of Israel have angered God, thus allowing the king of the Canaanites to take them captive, leading to twenty years of oppression by the Canaanites. This text stands in relation to the Abrahamic covenant and the working out of the covenant that we witnessed last week. The establishment of the Israelites in the Promised Land should be viewed not as a once and forever gift but rather as part of an ongoing working out of the relationship between God and His people. Here we see that when the people did not live up to God's standards, God removed them from the land. We are reminded again that, although God has gifted the land to them, the land remains God's. How we live on the land and how they live on the land that was promised and now given to them, is therefore important. At the same time we see that the removal of the people from the land is not forever, but is a mechanism by which they are to realise that they need to return to God, who is the ultimate owner of the land and able to restore the people to the land.

This text reminds us that when people are in trouble we should repent of our wrongdoing in the hope that God will liberate us. There is a need for repentance of the unjust ways in which both the people and the land have been treated. We need to repent of our refusal to accept that climate change is real and act urgently to mitigate its impacts. We need to repent of the greed that is forcing us to place profits before people and creation. We need to repent of how refugees are being treated, as if they are not also created in the image of God. We are in need of God's help if we are going to address land reform and food sovereignty.

(From Word and Worship – Year A 2019-2020; p311)

Today we think about the importance of 'land'. How do we value our 'land'?

- Do we keep our land/communities clean? What can you do to halt climate change?
- Are we willing to share our 'land' with all God's people? How do we view those who are homeless or live in informal settlements?

*God of the covenant,
even when we fall into sin and live only for ourselves,
your Spirit invites us to remember
that you chose us to be your servant people.
Awaken us to the power and gifts
you pour into us for the good of creation,
and grant that we may be trustworthy in all things,
producing abundantly as we work to build your realm.*

Amen.

