

Sermon for All Age Harvest Service Sunday 7th October 2018

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I wonder how many of you remember a book about a very hungry caterpillar. It had little holes in it and it told the story of a very hungry caterpillar who ate everything starting with pears and apples and oranges and then chocolate cake and lollipops and sausages until he finally ate a green leaf and went to sleep and turned into a beautiful butterfly.

Well I want to talk about another very hungry creature today but NOT one that turns in to a butterfly. I want to talk about LOCUSTS! We heard about them in one of our readings today. Has anyone ever seen a locust? We don't get many in Ealing – thank goodness! They look a bit like a very big beige grasshopper. But the most noticeable thing about them is their MOUTHS. They eat absolutely EVERYTHING. And you don't just get one locust and his mouth you get hundreds and thousands of them and all their mouths!

We heard about some locusts in our first reading today in Bible times and today in hotter countries locusts can eat a whole HARVEST in one whoosh. A farmer can be proud of his field of wheat ready to be harvested and then a dark cloud on the horizon WHOOSH or rather MUNCH and is all gone. No harvest this year – and no bread.

A vineyard owner can be very proud of all his beautiful vines full of delicious grapes and then that dark cloud on the horizon and WHOOSH – MUNCH an all is gone. No harvest this year – and no wine.

Well we are lucky here that locusts don't eat all our harvests but we do need to remember that in many places in the world people do starve when the harvest fails. In this country people do struggle to feed their families too and our collection of produce today is to help Ealing Food Bank have enough to share with all who need it.

But although we don't have locusts, we do have things in our lives that eat away at us and spoil the pleasure and harvest that God wants for us.

Imagine this: it is a beautiful morning. The sky is blue and the birds are singing and you are in perfect health. But oh dear your brother has just annoyed you on the way to school or –for those of us a little older- oh dear

there was something on the radio about Brexit and suddenly the world feels grey and gloomy. Locusts have been at work!

Or you have a nice house and have just come back from a good holiday, but oh dear your friend has a much nicer house and has just come back from a fancier holiday. Suddenly your house and holiday do not seem so great. Locusts have been at work! There are many ways that locusts can be at work and we may all have our own swarm some days.

In our Gospel Jesus is not talking about locusts but he is talking about things ~~that~~. Worries, fears, envy. The things that get in our way. The locusts in our lives. Jesus said: "Do not worry about your life...can anyone by worrying add a single hour to your life?" Important to notice that Jesus does not say DO NOT CARE about the things of life but DO NOT WORRY. He did not say that there is nothing to worry about, there always is – far too much for us to deal with and that is the point. We must trust that he holds safe the harvest of each day and the harvest of our lives. **He will restore to us the years the locust has eaten.**

Only we know what gets in the way this morning – what is eating us as that very interesting saying goes.

Here in this place is a true harvest of the bread and wine that we share and the harvest of God's love for us in. Before we come to this harvest table this morning let us pray for insight and release from our locusts and the destructive power of our worries and turn to God in thanksgiving and joy.
Amen