

Kirkgate 6-9-20 Live Service

Hello and Welcome to all who are able to tune in to the service this morning. The peace of our Lord Jesus be with us all once more as we listen and take part in our recording for Kirkgate Parish Church on this the 6th September 2020.

Today we are in the church hall and coming to you live for all who are able listening on line or on the telephone. I hope you are blessed by our fellowship along with those who have ventured in here today.

Its a strange feeling being back, joyful and at last a kind of normality. But a new normality. I can tell you all as I look out I see half of familiar faces as we all need to wear face coverings.

We haven't met up this way since March and its going to be a bit different, we can have music, prayers, Bible readings and sermons, reflective music - maybe a recital or two, but no singing - at least until the rules change if things get a little better.

Actually there may even be a recording on line that Stuart will put on that includes our usual hymns. So look out for that.

We should be very grateful to those who are making it possible for us to be back in the church building, the training, the risk assessments and the cleaning all for the benefit of the church family.

Thank you also to those who have tirelessly phoned members over the lock down period. A special thank you to Stuart and those behind the scenes getting this broadcast up and running. Well done all.

You are in for another treat tonight as Kirkgate by Request twill be available once more on the web site and thank you to Stuart for gathering all the requests and making a lovely broadcast out of it. A time of encouraging music and hymns with well wishes from one to another.

Its good to be back so let us worship for a time in the presence of Jesus. So, as usual, take a few seconds or so to calm your hearts and minds and take a couple of deep breaths.

Call to worship Psalm 111

Praise the Lord.

I will extol the Lord with all my heart
in the council of the upright and in the assembly.

Great are the works of the Lord;
they are pondered by all who delight in them.

Glorious and majestic are his deeds,
and his righteousness endures forever.

Let us join together in prayer, let us pray.

Faithful and loving Lord God,
It is so good to meet up once more with sister sea brothers in Christ and knowing You are with us by Your Holy Spirit.

Our Living God

long ago you freed people who were slaves from Egypt,
and called them your own people.

Even as we gather today in Your presence we marvel at Your grace and mercy towards us that brings pardon for sin and freedom to live.

Lord God You change things around us: to move from what hurts
to what heals,

from what traps

to what gives us freedom.

Help us live like that too:

moving from dislike to love.

That's the way you do things,

that's the way you change the world, that's the way you ask us to live, Always prepared, always watchful to move with Your Holy Spirit

then we can make our own life story working with you

to help everyone live fully, freely, and fairly together.

Sometimes, Heavenly Father,

Your Word is hard for us.

Sometimes,

we don't want to hear You.

Sometimes,

we'd rather sing our nice hymns,

pray our comforting prayers,

and turn away from what You require.

Send Your Holy Spirit,

that we may turn to You,

in the Word read and proclaimed,

that we may listen, understand, change and obey.

Forgive us anew Father as we open our hearts and minds to Your prompting,
to sit in peace with our brothers and sister in Christ and to find it a joyful
experience to worship and serve You this day.

And so Lord God here us as we repeat the prayer Jesus taught us when we
say together.

Klrkgate 6-9-20 Live Service

Our Father,
Who art in Heaven
Hallowed be thy name
Thy Kingdom come
Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven
Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts
as we forgive our debtors
and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil
for Thine is the Kingdom the power and the glory
Forever

Our Scripture Reading continues this week in Luke Chapter 12 verses 35-48

Be Ready for the Lord's Coming New Living Translation.

35 “Be dressed for service and keep your lamps burning, **36** as though you were waiting for your master to return from the wedding feast. Then you will be ready to open the door and let him in the moment he arrives and knocks. **37** The servants who are ready and waiting for his return will be rewarded. I tell you the truth, he himself will seat them, put on an apron, and serve them as they sit and eat! **38** He may come in the middle of the night or just before dawn.^[a] But whenever he comes, he will reward the servants who are ready. **39** “Understand this: If a homeowner knew exactly when a burglar was coming, he would not permit his house to be broken into. **40** You also must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected.” **41** Peter asked, “Lord, is that illustration just for us or for everyone?” **42** And the Lord replied, “A faithful, sensible servant is one to whom the master can give the responsibility of managing his other household servants and feeding them. **43** If the master returns and finds that the servant has done a good job, there will be a reward. **44** I tell you the truth, the master will put that servant in charge of all he owns. **45** But what if the servant thinks, ‘My master won’t be back for a while,’ and he begins beating the other servants, partying, and getting drunk? **46** The master will return unannounced and unexpected, and he will cut the servant in pieces and banish him with the unfaithful. **47** “And a servant who knows what the master wants, but isn’t prepared and doesn’t carry out those instructions, will be severely punished. **48** But someone who does not know, and then does something wrong, will be punished only lightly. When someone has been given much, much will be required in return; and when someone has been entrusted with much, even more will be required.

Amen

Sermon. My reflection today is entitled - Prepared to be watchful.

Well we are back in the church at last. Over the spring and summer months we still were able to partake in worship in many different online forms. We never rested from it did we. We never let the guard down and relax or drift away from the faith. At least that is my hope for the church in the nation. The leadership of the church found themselves doing even more in the week because of the steep learning curve of recording services, filming, putting things together for the flock who could sit in the comfort of home and take it all in, tea and toast in hand.

May I take this opportunity to say a big thank you to those of Kirkgate Parish Church who are working away in the background to get the doors open, to do the risk assessments required by Presbytery and for those in the pastoral group who kept up the telephone contacts over the whole period and continue to this day keeping many together and bringing cheer and comfort as they call. Well done to all.

Jesus talks in our passage we heard read today all about not letting the guard down, always being ready, always taking the opportunity to spread the good news of the Kingdom that we learned of when we became Christians, by word and deed.

Always being prepared and watchful within ourselves in keeping our faith sharp for Jesus. Standing by the door with a lamp lit ready to open and go just like the Israelites of the exodus. Ready to leave a life of slavery to sin to be set free.

Why is Jesus pressing the matter of preparation and watchfulness so much with His disciples? He returns to this type of subject a number of times in the gospels, about being ready. Its perhaps not what we want to hear at times. Warnings and talk of punishment. But we also recognise that God is a righteous God and Holy and that disobedience must be justly chastised. Any parent must lay down the rules and expect this family to follow them.

Times was short for Jesus. There was to come an enormous responsibility for His disciples who would take up their own cross eventually and go spread the good news of the Kingdom - the message of redemption found through repentance and belief on the Son of God Jesus the Messiah so long awaited.

They, like us today, would find the help of the Holy Spirit of God given them at Pentecost. And O!, if we could stick to that simple message as well, we might very well see a river of revival?

The passage speaks directly to us of the second coming of Christ and makes it clear it will be at a time when we least expect it, perhaps even in the late night or early morning.

So how are we to be 'good and faithful servants'. The connotations in the language used in the passage from Luke is perhaps more suited to the customs and traditions of the time, but it speaks to us never the less for we should, value our lives less in worldly terms, but more in Heavenly terms and see ourselves as slaves to the Lord. I know slavery is a bad subject in todays language, but slaves for us for Christ is not at all bad for us or the community we serve.

And that is no bad thing, for if we are good slaves of the Lord, or obedient servants then Christ will come to us and the roles are reversed. He will tenderly serve us. Remember Jesus washing the feet of His in the upper room in a show of humility and servitude. An idea anomalous to Palestinians of the time that the master should serve the slaves.

This is a passage that speaks to us of how we would like God to find us in our daily lives as we wait between the ascension of Christ to His second coming.

1) He should find us with completed work or on solid on going work in the Kingdom. Verse 35 Girding up our loins relates to the way that the long flowing dress of the ancients was hitched up to allow ease of running or working. We should gird our loins so to speak and get on with serving in the Kingdom. Living up to the calling we are all individually given responsibility for. Be that to evangelise, to offer hospitality, to speak to others of Jesus and in a myriad of various ways using the gifts of the Spirit we are graciously given as Christians.

But God needs to find us at our task completed to a great extent. Ready for His calling. There is no rest for the believer in Christ, for we are called to honour and worship God with our lives daily.

Colossians 3:23 ESV

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,

Mark 16:15 ESV

And he 'Jesus' said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.

verse **12:36**. So The Master is away celebrating. Wedding celebrations may last four to seven days in the ancient custom, but that didn't matter how long the master was away. When he returns, he does not want to have to rouse

you from your bed to open the door. He wants you at the door ready with the lamp, ready to open up, welcome Him back and to carry out the tasks he has planned for you.

Jesus himself said to His Father in Heaven, 'I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do' (John 17:4).

Despite all that befalls our church we make sure we do not leave a task undone that ought to have been finished, before night falls. Even through lock down.

2) When Jesus returns we should expect Him to find us at peace with each other and with God. In Ephesians 4, Paul tells us not to let the sun go down while we are still angry with another brother or sister in Christ. Settle arguments before bed time, for that sunset might be our last and we will have no more time to sort things out. In many of the epistles Paul talks of unity in the body of Christ. and Jesus told us to love each other as a direct commandment.

3) Jesus should find us at peace with the Father. Honouring and praising God. Glorifying God for what He allows us and the grace that He has for us that is sufficient for us even when we look out on a world tempting us with riches and the accolades of men.

But for us the Christian who labours obediently for God the rewards are far beyond anything the world has to offer. For those of us who are ready and are answering the call of God what a pleasant and amazing surprise we should expect.

Romans 8:28 ESV

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

The slaves will lie down at the table ready to eat. The master here puts on the slaves clothes and prepares the banquet for us. As we return to church, as we see each other in the flesh for the first time once more, let us encourage each other then to be alert and receptive to God's small voice of calling.

In verses **12:39–40**. Jesus told the parable of the robber. Christ, the Son of Man, is coming back just as unexpectedly as the thief came to break in and rob the house, are we feeling alert and ready?

Then Peter's question, divides our passage and it is not answered by Jesus directly.

Peter wants to know if Jesus is speaking just to them or to everyone. Jesus follows the question with another parable **12:42–48**. A parable about a sensible

servant or in some translations an administrator who is both wise and trustworthy. Such men were responsible for feeding the other slaves and workers and keeping a good house for the master.

They should be loyal faithful and trustworthy and as such would be given more and more trusted positions in the masters absence. That is how the disciples and those in our churches with positions of leadership should be. Maybe that is what you can expect as well, for those who have much, much will be expected of them. For those who have little, little will be expected and for those who abuse those privileges there are different grades of punishment. Jesus seems to speak to the leaders, but the crowds who are in a great number, may be within earshot as well.

You see Christian dedication is about the responsibility that the Lord has given us. It is about doing what we already know we should be doing and to do it with a cheerful heart and find the joy in serving.

It is when we fear the task, doubt our resources to meet the task that we might procrastinate, we might ignore our calling and we might dilly dally too long and miss the opportunity.

**We have prayer,
we have power
and we have our friend our Holy Spirit.**

We have the strength and the resources for what we are called to do in mission. We just need to step out in faith to do it. And as we return to church let us see the door stays open, so to speak, as it might have to do anyway for the risk assessments on Covid 19.

But metaphorically let us open the door and leave it ajar for those who need to hear the word, better still break out of the building and shout it from the roof tops metaphorically speaking of course. We have lived outwith the buildings for months and though it is nice to be getting back in let us remember not to seek the comfort of the house, but to search for God's will in reaching out once more.

Perhaps today of all days you wanted a soft message of comfort and a cheering up. Friends we are comforted by Jesus, we are to be joyful in all matters of faith and obedience, we are to be thankful in all circumstances especially today as we meet up again or listen to this service.

People have had time to think about life,
think about their mortality,

Klirkgate 6-9-20 Live Service

think about the after life and what that might look like.

Time to think about getting their lives in order with God.

Time to think about sin and blessing.

People are in need of the comfort brought forth from Kingdom living, given the assurance of everlasting life in Heaven with our Lord and Saviour Jesus.

Friends - There is a community living in darkness all around us and we are to be light and life for them.

When the master comes will he find us shining our lit lamps to our communities, will he find the church ready and watchful as a place of peace and justice and will He find us glorifying and honouring the Father in Heaven as we should by our love of Christ and our faithfulness as we promised?

If so then let us, who proclaim Jesus Lord of all, go in peace today and the joy and love of our Lord be with us and rule over us always.

Amen

As we ponder over these thoughts today, Stuart will play some reflective music for us. Please take this time to sit in peace and calm and remember that relationship that God has with us. Personalise it for yourselves, it is real and it is here and now, with you, with me.

Reflective Music.- Stuart

**Thank You Lord that You are here with us as we sit in Your presence.
So now let us pray our prayers of intercession.**

Let us pray.

Loving Lord God

As you call us out upon the water in oceans deep as the song goes, help us to stay afloat in order to serve and to be served. Help us to show Your love in word and deed. Peace and love to a world in turmoil at this time.

Father we bring our prayers for that world now as we remember all those caught up in the ever widening circle of the Corona Virus. In Your mercy Father be with those in great need of healing and comfort today. Show Your power and love through Your Spirit and through Christian endeavour in the world for a ll in need, bringing much needed medicines, food, water and clothing. For all those displaced and homeless - the forgotten and the marginalised and hated by society - let Your hand of healing, peace and comfort rest on them that they may know there is much much more yo life than the depth they have experienced.

Klrkgate 6-9-20 Live Service

We think this day of those returning to work, going back to school, coming out to worship and many other things they need to do and we ask for Your great protection to be over them.

We pray for all those in positions of authority that must help look out for the wee being of the nations. Lord grant them integrity, honesty, responsible conscience and the strength at their arm to make the necessary provision available to secure peace and to bring justice and healing across our world. Places where we know there is great strife and human suffering. For all those countries great and small Lord we pray they may come to bow before the Throne of Grace and know of the Lord Jesus who offers salvation by His sacrificial love on the cross.

We remember in prayer all your churches that are opening or thinking of opening up for worship and ask for Your peace and protection on Your children as they come. Speak into the hearts of all those who are anxious about coming back at this time, bring assurance to them that they are not forgotten and that You are a God that walks beside them and holds them dear no matter where they are. Loving God we pray for our ministers and church leaders as they grapple with all the restrictions and yet provide worship and gather the flock in unity. Bless them with peace of mind and bring encouragement and inspiration only You can give in the world of Christian faith. We give thanks today for them and ask that You come alongside those so called into ministry that they may know of Your great presence each day.

Abba Father we come upon pain and suffering fear and worry in others and for ourselves almost on a daily basis. We bring our personal prayers for others we know who are suffering now in our time of personal prayer.

Gracious Lord God, You have heard the silent and spoken prayers of our hearts, bless us now as we continue in our worship and stay close by us for we pray in the precious name of Jesus Christ and for His sake.

Amen

Now let us hear the words of the sending and blessing as we take our leave of each other once more.

From whatever binds us,
from that which holds us back,
from the fear of change that traps us, release us now to go in faith,
to step forward with your grace,

Klrkgate 6-9-20 Live Service

and to live the gospel of love,
in our community and world.

Walk with us now and always.

And the blessing of God Almighty Father Son and Holy Spirit go with us and
remain with us now and forever more.

Amen

Thank you for turning our today in such trying circumstances, hopefully things
will ease up more over the coming weeks and months.

Keep safe and see you all next week God willing.

Music.