

Kirkgate Parish Church - transcript of the service 11-10- 20

Well Hello and a very warm welcome all whether you are sitting with us in the hall or are at home listening in to the live stream or on the phone. A great welcome to our short time of worship in Ardrossan and Saltcoats Kirkgate Parish Church for the 11th October 2020. I hope you are blessed to be part of the church family today, to partake in the prayers, the songs and the word. I know we cannot sing the hymns and that is so frustrating, but if you at home can sing even louder we will feel it in our hearts and minds as we sit in the church hall in stoney silence before God.

Now there are still some intimations to be given.

This coming week there is the Kirk Session meeting on the 22nd at 8pm on zoom. The code and password should be known to you through the magazine, but if not give Vivien a call and she will put you right there.

I keep plugging the Blythwood Christmas boxes and Maureen would like her number broadcast again for those who don't get the online magazine at this time. It is 464969.

Maureen has a goodly number of gloves and scarves and there are many other small items that can be donated. Now Maureen asks you to call her if you need gifts or boxes picked up - just call. The number again 01294 464969

Can I say on all our behalf a big thank you to Stuart for the latest broadcast of 'Kirkgate by Requests'. I get a lump in the throat listening to some of the wee messages you all give in for each other. Even some of the music would bring a tear to a glass eye. I mean that in a good way Stuart. Well done - looking forward to the next one.

I know some can't get the magazine as yet for paper copies are not being printed or delivered at this time, but those who have received it will be delighted in the publication once more, thank you Elizabeth, if you are listening, for another great read no doubt aided by Stuart as well.

So unless there is anything else let us come to worship.

As always let us take a deep breath and relax before we continue in our worship of the Lord.

The peace of the Lord Jesus dwell among us and within us.

I have taken the words of the hymn written by Marty Haugen as the call to worship this morning. The Hymn can be found in CH4 623 'Here in this place new light is streaming', or as Marty Haugen entitles it 'Gather us In'.

Gather Us In

Here in this place new light is streaming
Now is the darkness vanished away
See in this space our fears and our dreamings
Brought here to you in the light of this day
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken
Gather us in, the blind and the lame
Call to us now and we shall awaken
We shall arise at the sound of our name

**Let us open our worship by listening in and singing along to
CH4 449 Rejoice the Lord is King.**

CH4 449 Rejoice the Lord is King

1 Rejoice, the Lord is King! your Lord and King adore;
mortals give thanks and sing, and triumph evermore;
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;
rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

2 Jesus, the saviour, reigns, the God of truth and love;
when he had purged our stains he took his seat above;
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

3 His kingdom cannot fail, he rules both earth and heaven,
the keys of death and hell are to our Jesus given;
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

4 He sits at God's right hand till all his foes submit,
and bow to his command, and fall beneath his feet:
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

5 Rejoice in glorious hope! for Christ the Judge shall come,
and take his servants up to their eternal home.
We soon shall hear the archangel's voice;
God's trumpet call shall sound, rejoice!

Charles Wesley

Let us pray aware of life's short duration in time as we approach
God's Throne of grace today.

Loving Lord God we use old fashioned words sometimes,
we use old fashioned hymns sometimes, but we come very much in
the now to be with You.
To dwell in Your radiance, to sit at Your feet.

Come close Father that we might feel You near all the time,
hear You and know of Your love all the time.

Lord God, we praise You sometimes,
we give You all the honour and Glory sometimes,

help us to invite our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to come and
dwell within us so that Your word, Your law of love is written on our
minds and manifested from our hearts in beautiful servitude for
Jesus all the time.

What a day You have given us Abba Father,
what a night we still live through to be awakened yet again in finite
time.

We remember Your blessings sometimes,
we remember to bless others sometimes,

Gracious Father help us to bless You with our sanctified lives all the
time.

Help us to pray to You all the time,
to be obedient to You all the time.

While there is still time.

For we desire to be with You all the time and in forever time as we
come into Glory in due time.

Lord God in Heaven while we remain in Your presence at this time
we bring our daily prayer, the prayer Jesus taught when we say
together

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.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil

For thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory

For ever

Amen

**Our Bible Reading is one you heard last week but this time
only the one parable in Matthew 22 verses 1-14. Te Great Feast.
I felt a little unfinished business with this so Deirdre will read it
once more.**

Let us hear the word of God

Matthew 22 verses 1 to 14 from the New Living Translation

Parable of the Great Feast

22 Jesus also told them other parables. He said, **2** “The Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a king who prepared a great wedding feast for his son. **3** When the banquet was ready, he sent his servants to notify those who were invited. But they all refused to come!

4 “So he sent other servants to tell them, ‘The feast has been prepared. The bulls and fattened cattle have been killed, and everything is ready. Come to the banquet!’ **5** But the guests he had invited ignored them and went their own way, one to his farm, another to his business. **6** Others seized his messengers and insulted them and killed them.

7 “The king was furious, and he sent out his army to destroy the murderers and burn their town. **8** And he said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready, and the guests I invited aren’t worthy of the honour. **9** Now go out to the street corners and invite everyone you see.’ **10** So the servants brought in everyone they could find, good and bad alike, and the banquet hall was filled with guests.

11 “But when the king came in to meet the guests, he noticed a man who wasn’t wearing the proper clothes for a wedding.

12 ‘Friend,’ he asked, ‘how is it that you are here without wedding clothes?’ But the man had no reply. **13** Then the king said to his aides, ‘Bind his hands and feet and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

14 “For many are called, but few are chosen.”

Let us join in singing along with CH4 685 For everyone born a place at the table.

Hymn CH4 685 For Everyone born a place at the table

For Everyone Born, A Place at the Table

For everyone born, a place at the table,
for everyone born, clean water and bread,
a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing,
for everyone born, a star over head.

Refrain:

And God will delight when we are creators
of justice and joy, compassion and peace;
yes, God will delight when we are creators
of justice, justice, and joy.

For woman and man, a place at the table,
revising the roles, deciding to share,
with wisdom and grace, dividing the power,
for woman and man, a system that's fair.

Refrain

For young and for old, a place at the table,
a voice to be heard, a part in the song,
the hands of a child in hands that are wrinkled,
for young and for old, the right to belong.

Refrain

For just and unjust, a place at the table.
abuser, abused, with need to forgive,
in anger, in hurt, a mind-set of mercy,
for just and unjust, a new way to live.

Refrain

For everyone born, a place at the table,
to live without fear, and simply to be,
to work, to speak out, to witness and worship,
for everyone born, the right to be free.

Refrain

Words: Shirley Erena Murray

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My Reflection today is entitled - A 'staycation' for the Soul

Lord guide my tongue that what I say will reach minds and hearts and encourage and bolster faith in our Lord Jesus this day as we think on Your words of life in our Bibles.

Amen

I felt that we had some unfinished business with Jesus' parables in Matthew's Gospel from last week. I felt the need to look again a bit more in depth at the great wedding feast. It is probably more like two parables in the making.

It can be taken on two levels at least. A personal one and a universal or worldly one.

The first part dealing with the invitation to come and the second about how we come that matters.

Jesus is telling of a King who to us might seem rather fierce and tempestuous, but not without reason, I guess, because of the way he is ignored by his subjects, His chosen people - if we relate the King as God as Jesus would have it.

A people who tarried long and eventually gave up on the invitation to repent and come into the Kingdom that John the Baptist and Jesus was preparing for all humanity.

Not some might come into the Kingdom with repentance and joy and some might come who are called with no real humility in their heart before the Lord.

Verse 14 Many are called but few are chosen,

A stark warning at the end of the parable.

When God calls are we like the subjects in the parable, do we tarry long and give up on it and do our own thing?

Surely when God calls we drop everything and run to Him in obedience?

Is that the way you think of it?

What about finishing a good work, or being patient as God is the epitome of patience especially with us who sin so often?

What about the disciples Jesus called from the fishing nets,

Matthew 4:18-22 NIV

Jesus Calls His First Disciples

18 As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. **19** “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.”

20 At once they left their nets and followed him.

21 Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, **22** and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

immediately left their trade to follow Jesus. There is an immediacy about our call from God, yet He must be very patient as we dither for years sometimes needing proof and discernment.

God's calling can be a constant thing on ones conscience, almost like a finger tapping on the shoulder.

“Hey come on get up and go”

“Hey I'm needing you”

“Hey there is a gift beyond your widest imaginings waiting for you as you find joy in serving”

“Hey there is love and mercy for you in coming to faith in Jesus, a family waiting around the large table for you to come to the greatest feast of all”

We know from our reflection last week that Jesus is criticising or at least pointing out to the religious leaders in the temple that they are

falling far short of their calling to look out for God's people. To look out for the Son of God among them.

He is aware of their unbelief and rejection. He is telling them that the prostitutes and the tax collectors are going to enter God's Kingdom well before them at the end of Ch 21.

And so in the parable the invitation to the 'King's own' is open to the Jews exclusively for the time being. God calling the Jewish nation to come to the feast, to enter the Kingdom and rejoice at the son's wedding.

Who is the son marrying, perhaps the church - the bride of Christ - the makings of a New Covenant. God's people who will receive such a gift and take the good news to the world. But that was not to be.

The servants once more are the prophets turning heads, opening ears to God's plea to live up to the Covenant, to acknowledge and obey joyfully and dutifully, His commands.

To tabernacle with him in this mighty hall of a world.

The first lot of prophets go out as we read last week in the vineyard then a second lot go out as well and they are all dealt a bad blow by the farmers or the Guests we read in this parable today. Some of the servants were beaten stoned or killed.

What of the prophets of old, let us think of some and their untimely death.

Isaiah was martyred - sawn in two at the order of Manasseh,

Jeremiah was stoned to death in Egypt,

Ezekiel was martyred at the hands of the Chaldeans,

Micah martyred at the hands of King Jehoram son of Ahab in the northern Kingdom and so it went on.

The distractions of this world carry us away from the faith at times as we ignore the call to delight in God's company and to experience God's providence. Perhaps we feel the need to go and work at something else, feed our minds on other things rather than the

Word of God - go elsewhere when we should be worshipping in unity with our brothers and sister in Christ.

The people invited in the parable went off to their business, to their farms.

What of Immediacy?

You see the invitation to the banquet in these ancient times was a two fold affair. Firstly the servants went out and told the subjects that a feast was imminent, being prepared, but the timing of it was still not known, so just be at the ready.

So the subject or guest of the King or noble, one must assume, would cancel any major appointment for the next few days just in case. Then the servants would be sent out a second time with the invitation to come - **now**. Its ready **now**.

Can you imagine getting a Christmas dinner ready and then phoning the family and saying its on the table now, get here in the next few minutes.

What would this King be like with steaming hot food on the table and none of the guests turn up?

God is calling, are we ready, are we aware of what might get in the way of a calling.

Maybe Jesus comes and calls us - come, come to me,

He is calling you and me to himself. Bring your troubled hearts to him, dine with him, for it is said

Revelation 3:20

New Living Translation

“Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.

Jesus calls -

Come dine with me, eat and drink me in.

Ephesians 5 :18 NLT

Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit,

I know it seems temperamental and tempestuous of God to get so angry that he will destroy and burn cities because of disobedience.

I look to Sodom and Gomorra and see God in His righteousness and Holiness. It speaks to us volumes about consequences for all who disobey, all who ignore the invitation of salvation in Christ.

There is consequences in sinning, dire consequences. Sin leads to death, faith in our Lord Jesus leads to life and everlasting life in Heaven.

A simple, yet very profound, truth.

Come, He is inviting - you have every opportunity to be saved in Jesus. To find a new life in Him who created you. That is what we might want to do today.

To dwell in His presence as if at the great feast so to speak.

To have our hearts healed, our anxieties and fears bound up and expelled today. Our faith nurtured by wholesome feeding on the Word in our Bibles.

That peace and healing of the heart and mind is what we might need at times like these living with a pandemic - Covid 19 is it not?

Answering that call, that invitation to come into the presence of our Lord seeking peace, seeking restitution, **seeking a staycation for the soul.**

Not going out into the mission field all the time, but coming in from the community when we need sustenance and rest ourselves.

Peace and rest is offered gladly to us.

Professor William Barclay once put it something like this,
We need to have a balance between going out and coming in. But coming in is no excuse for staying in and doing nothing in the Kingdom. Getting too cosy by the fire, too comfortable with our own limitations.

Well Jesus implies here that God's chosen people were not taking the opportunity to come to the table. Not willing to accept the invitation to come to have peace with God or believing on the Son who was to be married in a new covenant of love with humanity. Except that covenant was not adorned with a wedding ring, but a blood soaked cross outside the city walls at Golgotha the place of the skull. A horrible place away from the beauty of the city of God.

There will be consequences, Jesus warns us, there will be gnashing of teeth.

Then we come to the last little part of this parable which can stand on its own, verses 11 - 14. The story of when all the guests, the good and the bad, the pious and the sinner are all in attendance. Called by the King when others wont come.

When all the world is invited no matter who or what they are and seated at the table the King notices one poor soul not dressed for the occasion.

It is expected we would at least change into something casual but smart for the event. Each guest, then, would make an effort because of the generous invitation to the banquet. But this poor soul forgot or wasn't aware or worse still didn't care. WE might think his treatment was a little harsh. Surely a bouncer on the door could just ask him to leave, but to tie him up hand and foot and bodily chuck him out seems a bit harsh.

You see there are consequences.

We are not looking at clothing here, we are not caring about whether this man came in jeans or a three piece suit and black tie. We are considering the heart of the person. Was the heart dressed and ready for the occasion.

Did his soul that was dark long for the light and life on offer?

Or did the soul come with sin and remain wilfully in sin?

You see it is all right to come to God as a sinner for we all are, but it is not all right to remain sinning if we can help it when we change and have a new life born afresh in Christ Jesus.

We may not have a clean shirt to our name, but we must have a clean heart for Jesus. Be prepared to let Jesus come into our hearts and dwell there so that we might become living sacrifices for Him who sacrificed His life for us.

We may do wrong in some way daily, but what is important is that we come dressed in our hearts for forgiveness, because we come not unaware of what is asked of us, but ready to open ourselves to the healing ministry of our Lord God who loves us as His children.

Are we, thus, right with God today?

Is there sin like anger, hurt, worry fear or anything else that keeps us distracted from the call to come accept the greatest life change on offer?

Let us then have a time of honest debate with God, a time to reflect on our lives anew, to ask for healing, to ask for the power to forgive others, time to lay down our burden, our sinful nature before the Lord as we trudge through life carrying our own crosses.

Let us be known as those who came as guests invited, who know the consequences of continued sin and who know how to dress our hearts to be in the presence of a Holy and Righteous Father God. A loving God.

Let us be the people who are called and who are chosen by the grace of God.

If you value that thought and wish that in your heart let us have this time of peace as Stuart plays for a few moments. Pray for the healing of the heart, for the power of preparation for things to come, for the will to accept change that must surely come and give praise and thanksgiving to God in the highest.

In the name of our King you are all invited, now, immediately, in our minds eye rise from the stupor of uncertainty and doubt and come. Come eat and drink of the saviour who calls you to Him now to the greatest feast for the soul.

Let us pray

With heads bowed and eyes closed let us pray.

Loving Heavenly Father, we bow before You now, our hearts dressed in our finest robes before You.

AS we come before You now we ask for forgiveness for the things we have done, over and over again that grieves You.

Let forgiveness flow to us Lord God that we might be restored, healed, carried from this worry and doubt, from the ailments of our mind - our fear and worry.

Let us come to You Lord for Your **rest** as we offer ourselves for the work gathering Your harvest. Work we know must surely come

In the peace of this place Father receive the hearts of those who truly love you this day.

Lord you have my heart and I will search for yours, let me be to you a sacrifice.

And I will praise you Lord

And I will sing of love come down

And as you show your face

We'll see Your Glory here.

Amen

musical interlude for reflection - perhaps the hymn as before CH4
685 For everyone born one verse or as Stuart decides.

Prayer of Intercession.

Loving Lord God we bring our prayers for others now in this time of intercession.

We remember, at this time, the schools closing for the October holiday and for families who might be travelling to places on staycation,

we pray also for our ministers and church leaders who will be taking a well earned break with their families at this time also. Father God protect them and bring them peace and restoration after a strange and hard year. Bring them back safe and well and free of the Corona Virus.

We remember in prayer our school children and college and university students, teachers and lecturers all caught up in the world wide pandemic. All the disturbance to learning and to the normality that they knew.

Bless them all with peace and take away their anxieties and worry for their futures that they might be calm in the face of all the difficulties facing them.

We remember all those who are infected with the virus, those who are ill at this time, those recovering and those grieving the loss of a loved one or friend because of it. Lord in Your mercy hear our prayers for healing and for comfort for those involved.

Gracious God we remember all those businesses and people that are constantly challenged by the lock down, the worry and fear for the future because money might dry up and businesses close. Lord in Your great providence we pray for governments and worldly institutions to uphold those in need and to provide for all who might lose their job or businesses. We pray for the Three Towns, For Stevenston Saltcoats and Ardrossan that Your hand of peace and plenty will reign here.

We pray for the Reverend James McNay and his family as they are on holiday at this time. Bless them all with love that they might be able to be a family at play, having fun, and bless James so that he can just be a dad this week, free from cares and duties of the Church.

We pray for, too, Nigel and his family and ask that You help us find a date that he can come to be with us in His ministry here. Bless Nigel, Savior and Dee that they might settle and be happy in Ayrshire and in particular here in Saltcoats.

Lord You know that the world is still suffering a pandemic, wars and natural disasters and we recognise that we have forgotten some of these predicaments in the wake of our own worries. Lord God in Your mercy continue to bring peace to warring nations, bring provision for the sick, lonely and hungry, and stay the progress of Covid 19 at last.

And so Lord God as we bring these prayers before You now please hear the prayers of Your people gathered here and listening in as we take a little time to offer our intercessory petitions for those we know and love who need You to be with them today.

Lord God who provides for all our needs when we come to You humbly and ask in Jesus name, we give our love offering to You in the envelopes and from the online banking and pray that such offerings be committed into Your service as You guide those who administer this money on Your behalf and for the furtherance of Your Kingdom works here on earth.

Abba Father here these the solent and spoken prayers of Your children now for we bring them all in the precious name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and for His sake,
Amen

Our closing hymn for this service is that wise old hymn
CH4 511 Your hand O God has guided, some will sing Thy hand,
others will recite from CH4 Your hand, but whatever reaches the
heart sing it out with gusto, in your places to the Lord.

Thy hand, O God, has guided
Thy flock, from age to age;
The wondrous tale is written,
Full clear, on every page;
Our fathers owned thy goodness,
And we their deeds record;
And both of this bear witness:
One Church, one faith, one Lord.

Thy heralds brought glad tidings
To greatest, as to least;
They bade men rise, and hasten
To share the great King's feast;
And this was all their teaching,
In every deed and word,
To all alike proclaiming
One Church, one faith, one Lord

Through many a day of darkness,
Through many a scene of strife,
The faithful few fought bravely,
To guard the nation's life.
Their Gospel of redemption,
Sin pardoned, man restored,
Was all in this enfolded:
One Church, one faith, one Lord

And we, shall we be faithless?
Shall hearts fail, hands hang down?
Shall we evade the conflict,
And cast away our crown?
Not so: in God's deep counsels
Some better thing is stored;

We will maintain, unflinching,
One church, one faith, one Lord.

Thy mercy will not fail us,
Nor leave thy work undone;
With thy right hand to help us,
The victory shall be won;
And then, by men and angels,
Thy name shall be adored,
And this shall be their anthem:
One Church, one faith, one Lord.

We'll thank you once more for tuning in - until we meet again, keep
safe - let us here the words of the blessings.

Benediction

And now let us go remembering the wonderful invitation of our Lord
God,
Preparing our hearts in His presence
and answering the call God gives for each and every one of us
as we journey on in the faith with joy and peace and may the
blessing
of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us and remain with
now and forever.
Amen