

Kirkgate 4-10-20 Service (Vineyard)

Well Hello and welcome to our service of the 4th October 2020. Yes we have hit another land mark moving well into autumn. Well a very warm welcome come all who are tuning in and listening by phone near or far. I hope you are blessed and hopefully challenged by our worship today.

Please look out for Kirkgate by Requests tonight and take time to just relax and listen to the hymns and music with dedications Stuart has put together for us.

Just as an update on Nigel's arrival - your minister - you have completed the signing of the call and things are progressing now to hopefully get an induction date, however that service is to be conducted well watch this space as they say, but hopefully fairly soon. Exciting for you and praise God for the answer to the call to come to Kirkgate.

Maureen has put a good article about the Blythswood Christmas Boxes in the magazine - the dos and dont's of things to include.

Lastly there is to be a zoom Kirk Session meeting on the 22nd of October at 8pm and the code for that is on the web page.

We continue to gather in the church hall face coverings and hand sanitisers at the ready. If you want to come along we have made it as safe as possible for all. We can handle about 18 worshippers per service so if you feel you want to come out again and be with fellow worshippers you haven't seen in months then phone Mima and she will put your name on a list. Its no hassle for Mima so get on the phone.

Let us just take a wee second or two to help put us in that frame of mind to open our hearts in a spiritual way now before the Almighty Lord God.

Our call to worship this day is inspired by Psalm 118

Psalm 118

1

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Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

Let Israel say:

“His love endures forever.”

3

Let the house of Aaron say:

“His love endures forever.”

4

Let those who fear the Lord say:

“His love endures forever.”

Let us all gathered say

His love endures forever.

Let us open our worship with that mighty majestic hymn,
CH4: 111 Holy Holy Holy Lord God Almighty

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee;
holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty,
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,
casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
who wert and art and evermore shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee,
though the eye made blind by sin thy glory may not see,
only thou art holy; there is none beside thee,
perfect in power, in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name, in earth and sky and sea;
holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty,
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

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Come let us join together in prayer and we will split our prayer
around your scripture reading today.
Let us pray

Faithful God,
we awaken ourselves to Your presence
as we awaken too,
to our discovery of who we have become.
We know we were created in Your image,

that You have a history of bringing us out of slavery and into
freedom

and we long to find that freedom today.

We know You as the great restorer – able to transform all injustice
into the kingdom of heaven on earth and we open ourselves
to be part of Your future that is coming.

Loving and amazing God,

Your constant relationship of love and faithfulness is one which
sustains us through all things.

Your stories speak to us, transcending time and place, meeting us
here today.

We give You thanks for the choice to let go
of who we have thought ourselves to be
and become a runner in Your race,

with the experience of the love of Christ as our only goal.

We give thanks too, that You call us again and again to be Your
people,

that You love us and want us to live together
in fullness of community and life,

that You send people, prophets and Jesus, to show us Your love.

In turn, send us as Your people and prophets, and as Christ to
those who need to meet You.

We give thanks that You want us to be part of the harvest, In the
gathering of it and the sharing,

so that we might learn more
of what it is to be like You.

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Loving Lord God we pray in the manner that 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

Amen

Our scripture reading comes from Mathew 21 verses 28 - 46 and 22: verses 1-14 (NIV)

Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. Later he challenges them thus. Let us hear the word of God,

“What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’

“ ‘I will not,’ he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.

“Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, ‘I will, sir,’ but he did not go.

“Which of the two did what his father wanted?”

“The first,” they answered.

Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.

“Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit.

“The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. Last of all, he sent his son to them. ‘They will respect my son,’ he said.

“But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him and take his inheritance.’ So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

“Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?”

“He will bring those wretches to a wretched end,” they replied, “and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time.”

Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures:

“ ‘The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
the Lord has done this,
and it is marvellous in our eyes’?

“Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.”

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus’ parables, they knew he was talking about them. They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet.

Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.

“Then he sent some more servants and said, ‘Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.’

“But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

“Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.’ So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

“But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. He asked, ‘How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?’ The man was speechless.

“Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

“For many are invited, but few are chosen.”

(Only the middle parable is read in the live service.)

[The New International Version](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Shall we pray once more

We hold You to account God, for the things that do not go to plan.

We blame You.

We are angry.

We see You stopping justice from being served.

For we know You could do it better.

We know that You could make it perfect And so who else to rage at but You?

And it is in this moment of honesty that we find ourselves And our part in the story –

the things we stayed quiet about,

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the things we accepted as being okay,
(when deep down we know they are not), the times we served
ourselves first

so that there wasn't enough to go round.

We ask for Your restoration,

for You to make Your face shine upon us

that, having released our anger and blame

we discover the tools for planting again.

The hope for our future becoming our vision

that together, we can be Your people again.

Amen

Let us sing once more in our homes and rooms -
Hymn CH4 606 Lord You sometimes speak in wonders.

Reflection today is entitled - Working with God in His vineyard.

Today's passage comes towards the end of Jesus' ministry. It is the final days and before the crucifixion. It is the beginning of the end so to speak, where Jesus stirs up and attacks the religious leaders and the corrupt and legalistic way that Israel has failed once again to uphold the responsibility for the Kingdom of God - their inability to recognise the Messiah that was to come from within them, God's chosen people.

The Saviour foreseen by the prophets of old, one who would bring salvation to the world and usher in a new Kingdom on earth as it is in Heaven.

There are very sharp exchanges between Jesus and the rulers and religious leaders here at the temple including the Pharisees, Sadducees and scribes of the day.

This chapter opens with a dramatic scene and continues on in that pace as we read of the triumphal entry, the clearing of the temple, Jesus' authority questioned - healings and now warnings in these parables.

Like the prophets of old Jesus needs to have a dramatic entrance and to do dramatic things to get the attention of the people flocking into Jerusalem for the passover festival.

Why then do we look upon such tensions and conflict and place ourselves in the line of questioning too?

We like to beat ourselves up at times, I suppose, about the church's failure to act on God's (Jesus) command, to live the life Jesus asks of us and where we might be less than diligent about our mission to go and make disciples.

We often use these passages to harry the church for its failings, of which I have no doubt there are some if not many.

But where is the blessing in taking Jesus allegories here to heart. In the warnings that appear as curses there must be found blessings as well, for the two go hand in hand in most of Jesus teaching.

There is always a counter way, a better way to relive the situation. To get oneself right with God.

Indeed if nothing else we see the great patience of God in these parables.

So, trouble in the ancient times,

Trouble in the nation of Israel on a Spiritual level.

Trouble on a temporal level.

Tensions in the temple worship,

Tension on the streets with high taxes and restlessness among the rebellious Jews. A rebelliousness that would turn to war in time with the Roman occupiers.

Does the times of Jesus day reflect on our world today? Very rich Sadducees, very poor pilgrims. Very powerful people in charge, a vast majority with no voice.

Let us look briefly at what is being said here in these parables for the underlying warnings and meanings were not lost on the Pharisees and Religious leaders in the temple who knew fine what

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Jesus is getting at by comparing them to all the wicked tenants - people who say one thing and do another, or ignore God's love and invitation to attend the greatest banquet ever, the wedding feast of the saved in Jesus Christ.

I focus in on the middle parable.

So who is involved in the parable of the vineyard then?

The Vineyard is God's Kingdom

The Master who owned such a place is God Himself,

The tenant farmers are the religious leaders of Jesus time and before, the kings and rulers of Israel and Judah and even those in places of religious authority who don't live up to the mark today if we are taking this forward.

The servants who came to gather the share for the Master were the profits of old who were badly treated even killed because they were sent from God with warnings to turn from worldly sin and repent.

The Son who came, lastly, that the people might hopefully show some respect and he found only violence, rejection and death at the hands of these bad farmers. Jesus Christ the Son of God of course.

As always Jesus is telling a story that would be very understandable and clear to those listening around him. This was a troubled time in the land. Absent landlords would leave their farms or vineyards in the hands of tenants who would agree to pay a share of the crops. It was conceivable that such farmers were rogues themselves and would withhold a great deal of the agreed amount. It is also conceivable that any one who came to ask for the share would be badly treated maybe killed.

If we, in our imagination, enter the allegory and survey the landscape Jesus describes we see a vineyard in the best of condition for handing over.

Look -

God has left the Kingdom on earth in a good condition to be fruitful. The vineyard with a good tall walls, sometimes a thorny hedge to guard against robbers and wild animals, maybe even a wind break.

He has built a watch tower that can be used as a look out or as a bothy for the workers to sleep in. All was given in perfect condition for the tasks asked of the farmers. It was to be an easy task surely.

Notice here the patience of God with those who sin, those who err - those who do not carry out the agreement entered into earlier. The covenant between God and the people. God the master sent servants, the early prophets Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and so on and they were badly treated and ignored. God sent more prophets the minor ones in our Bibles who came with warnings and visions as well and they faced the same treatment. Ultimately God sent His only begotten Son Jesus who came to die that we might be given the greatest chance of all to come to the Father through the Son.

That is all those who believe on Jesus, who have faith that Jesus is who he said he is, a saviour who died was buried and rose again so that we might have peace at last with God the Father.

Jesus turns the tables on the Pharisees and religious people in the temple and lets them finish the story.

Verse 40 When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?"

41 They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a wretched end, and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.

Perhaps you might imagine a small smile on Jesus face and a slight nod of agreement of the head as the religious leaders gave their opinion.

Changing tack, he then drives home the moral point\

42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures:

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“The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
this was the Lord's doing,
and it is marvellous in our eyes’?

The quotation is from Psalm 118 verse 22

The quotation is not lost on the hearers, they know He is talking about them and that He is claiming to be that cap stone, key stone or corner stone. All stones that hold up the rest of the structure. All important bases to build a faith on. He is saying I am the Messiah you have all been waiting on.

They are angered and want to arrest Him for this and later they plotted to kill Him.

What encouragement can we take out of this?

Jesus is also saying in these parables, that those who do not pull their weight, those who act against His will and command to love and to serve will be replaced. The Kingdom will not be welcoming them.

It is a message that may be preached to churches to say ‘get your act together’, for you might be replaced, superseded, ignored and left to decline and close.

Of course that may well be the case for places that have a fire for mission and for Jesus that is dwindling and dying, but the encouragement I offer you is this for I am no prophet of doom. I love my church as do you or you would not be here, you would not listen in.

God gives every chance to sinners to do the right thing. He graciously allows sinners time to repent, to come to Him through His Son the Lord Jesus,
John 14:6(NIV)

6 Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

It is clear from our parable of the vineyard that Jesus rises above the prophets and that He is clearly saying to all through this parable that He is the Son of God.

He gives a good field to harvest in, no scruffy land with ragged worn out fences and a broken down watch tower.

He gives us all the right tools for serving.

He gives us the garden on our doorstep to play in, to reap a fruitful harvest.

He gives us the power in the His name Jesus,

He gives us the gifts of the Spirit to use as tools,

He blesses us and rejoices with us for every single soul that turns from sin and is saved.

This parable tells us much about God - He sets everything we need right here, and trusts us to carry out the tasks He ordained like the master leaving us to it, only wanting to see the fruit of our labour as we promised when we came to Jesus. God may leave us to it, but He doesn't go away on a long journey and become absent. He is intimate and supernatural or transcendent at the same time.

Kirkgate sits in the heart of a priority area - there is every chance to use these wonderful gifts God has graciously given that the church might become embedded into the heart of the community, watching from the tower for the move of the Spirit and where the mission fields lie - prepared to work hard at the harvest and give to God the honour and glory that is rightly His.

The potential is here to be had, however strange a time we live in. Imagination and vision will be required not just of Kirkgate, but of all churches on how to tend God's precious vineyard, His Kingdom here on earth. The new tenants are those who love Christ and are seeking a closer walk with Him in any troubled and peaceful era.

Even for you who are listening in who are still to come into the fold. God is patiently waiting on you to come into His Kingdom, waiting

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on you as a wonderfully made creation, made in His image, you who as I speak have ears to hear and who might feel that call to think again on the bountiful life Christ Jesus promises.

In our minds eye, does Jesus let us see the wonderful harvest fields that lie before us and the opportunities to love souls into the Kingdom here on earth - the promise to prepare a place for us as we travel on into everlasting life in the new Jerusalem to come.

He is waiting, watching, waiting.

Peace, love, joy, relief from the stresses of this world, and servitude are the badges of honour that awaits all who come. That is the easy yoke Jesus speaks of as we heard in last weeks reflection.

We may take warning from Jesus discourse here, but we may also see the blessing of God in this as well. For with every warning there is a blessing, Jesus always leaves us with that hope.

I'm not saying that all who went before us got it wrong, or were the bad tenants - I am saying that you will be the new tenants for Kirkgate in the new era to come. My prayer for you and for all churches will be that they see the vision to re-plough, to prune and to tend the masters vineyard with renewed vigour.

It is God's vineyard, let us then look upon it with the heart and eye of a good steward, honest, hard working and ready for the masters return, "on that day", as the Bible declares.

Kirkgate you are the new farmers now along with others, its up to you that fruit will be harvested in Saltcoats and Ardrossan. You have an exciting new chapter to open.

Let us pray.

When it is our walls coming down
and we see our family under attack,

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when we see the hope of harvest crumbling before us May Your presence be revealed

When it is the walls of others that are crumbling when the family under attack are our neighbour's, when we have enough, but they do not

May Your justice be stirred within us

When we are tearing down the walls when we are attacking our neighbours when we are taking what is not ours May Your mercy be upon us

When we have a choice to restore the walls when we have room for others

when harvest will feed everyone

May Christ's light shine from our hearts

as we share what we have. Amen

Collect

Forgotten God

You are hidden beneath our idea of being "good Christians". We long to rediscover Your faithfulness and love.

We want to reflect Your grace and mercy in our lives so that we may become the tenants of Your vineyard, ready to share our harvest with all.

Abba Father hear the heart felt prayers now of your children gathered before you for all have need of speaking with you about the world and personal happenings, all have aspirations and hopes to place before You Father

so hear us now as we bring these our troubles and joys before You in a time of silent prayer.

Loving Lord God your generosity astounds us at times, we are loved and cared for by Your hand of peace. Please accept this our love token today and as we commit it into your care may it swell the ranks of the Kingdom here on earth by Your glorious hand of providence.

Amen

CH4 154: O Lord my God when I in awesome wonder.

O Lord my God,
When I in awesome wonder
Consider all
The works Thy Hand hath made,
I see the stars,
I hear the mighty thunder,
Thy pow'r throughout
The universe displayed,

Refrain

*Then sings my soul,
My Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art!
How great Thou art!
Then sings my soul,
My Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art!
How great Thou art!*

When through the woods
And forest glades I wander
I hear the birds
Sing sweetly in the trees,
When I look down
From lofty mountain grandeur
And hear the brook
And feel the gentle breeze,

Refrain

When Christ shall come,
With shouts of acclamation,
And take me home,
What joy shall fill my heart!
Then I shall bow
In humble adoration
And there proclaim,
"My God, how great Thou art!"

Then sings my soul,

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My Savior God, to Thee,
How great Thou art!
How great Thou art!
Then sings my soul,
My Savior God, to Thee,
How great Thou art!
How great Thou art!

[And so to the blessing.](#)

May we be blessed with the restoration of Your vineyard
May we all have a part to play in that joyous task
May we see you in the tearing down of walls
and in our discovery of the Cornerstone that is Christ – yesterday,
today and forever.
And so let us go with joy and peace and the blessing of God the
Father, Son and Holy Spirit travel with us now and always.
Amen.