

Podcast
12th July 2020
Luke 18:15-17

Music
Welcome



Hello, and welcome to this week's worship podcast from New Kilpatrick Parish Church. I am Jeanette Peel, the probationary minister, at New Kilpatrick. We are already nearly halfway through July and the weather is doing its usual thing – raining as the school summer holiday officially starts! But whatever the weather or wherever you are listening from, and whatever day of the week it may be, thank you for being with us today. This new norm of meeting for worship in this way is becoming, or may already be, very familiar to you by now. If not, or if this is your first time, welcome. It is very different from meeting together in one place, but we are still a church community, and are very much here for you.

And over the next twenty minutes or so we will spend time in each other's company, and as time moves on, we become closer to meeting in person. Until then, we listen or watch online.

Over the summer, we have moved away from the main readings, as we would have done in church, and have jumped into the Gospel of Luke, picking up some of the more familiar readings. Our Zoomday Summer School groups are also looking at these stories and hopefully we will hear more of what they are doing as time moves on.

But for now, let us gather where we are.

Let us gather where we sit
Let us gather in the familiar,
Let us gather with others or
Let us gather on our own.

Wherever we are
Whoever we may be with
Whenever we meet
Let us gather as one to worship.

Reading – Luke 18:15-17

People were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them; and when the disciples saw it, they sternly ordered them not to do it. But Jesus called for them and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it."

Prayer

Let us turn our hearts and minds to God in prayer. Let us pray.

Loving God,

In the rain and the rainbows, in the wind or silence, you gather us in. Each of us in our own space but in unity with you and with each other. We come together in our own time to worship and reflect and hear the stories of our faith and in them hear you calling out to us today. We give thanks for the opportunity to be able to do so. Each one of us comes with our own vulnerability and brokenness, laid before you, listening and waiting.

Even though we cannot gather in one place, we gather with so many others in this same way. Everyone unique, loved and welcomed. No exclusions. Together we come. And now as a community of faith, wherever we may be, we come together as one voice as we say the Lord's Prayer:

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,
for ever.
Amen



Reflection

I wonder if you knew that today is National Simplicity Day, founded in honour of Henry David Thoreau, who was born on July 12, 1817. A lifelong abolitionist and defender against all things unjust – he would be shouting from the rooftops about what is happening in the world today. His essay, *Civil Disobedience*, influenced the political thoughts and actions of such notable figures as Leo Tolstoy, Mahatma Gandhi, and Martin Luther King Jr.

Thoreau was also an advocate of living simply, writing many books on the subject. In the complicated world that we inhabit today, and especially at this time, mobile phones, laptops, iPads, and other gadgets mean we can sometimes be glued to technology from morning till night. We very rarely experience true peace and quiet to gather our thoughts and live more simply. And yet, this is where Jesus is guiding us. Getting a balance of life as a disciplined and developed disciple. Allowing ourselves to be truly attuned to experience the Kingdom of God within us. Or as we have in Luke, the Kingdom of Heaven, here and now.

As you heard, today's reading was short. It was only three verses, but those verses still have plenty to say to us about simplicity and discipleship and how we can experience God. The passage comes directly after the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax-Collector. The one where the Pharisee, righteous and law-abiding in every way, is praying for all to see, and the Tax-Collector, is on his knees crying out to God asking for his mercy. I am not getting into the ins and outs of who was doing the correct thing; the righteous Pharisee was righteous to begin with, while the Tax-Collector recognised himself as one who needed God's mercy.

It feels strange then that we go straight from this to a story about children, especially infants, being brought to Jesus and how the disciples tried to stop it happening. In some



ways the disciples were maybe doing the right thing. Children, especially babies, were among the least during these times. They served no purpose and were a burden as they could not do anything for themselves and they were way below the hierarchal order of the day. So, we find the disciples doing the right thing only to discover they have got it wrong – as they often did. However, what we have here is Jesus overturning those cultural conventions and

putting those that are least in the centre – once again. Let the children come. A simple concept.

Several times in Luke's Gospel we hear of Jesus' speaking about children and how we should be like them. We have a similar story in Mark and in Matthew, and in Luke (Ch 9) when the disciples asked who was the greatest in heaven, Jesus replied, 'unless you can become like a child, you will never enter the Kingdom of heaven.' Jesus affirms children at the expense of the disciples' question.

But these short verses are also a teaching tool for the disciples as well as the mothers and fathers who would be there with their children. We read the children were touched by Jesus. We can only surmise that it is a blessing or for healing. The story does not tell us. And it is at this point, when the children were being brought forward, that the disciples intervene. Jesus did not stop. He still called the children to him, showing how their childlike values such as trust and dependence, not negative virtues such as pride or greed, anger or judgment, open up and allow us to receive the Kingdom of God.

Status, honour, power, and wealth are not the determining factors to experience the Kingdom of God, but those who honour God alone. There is no exclusivity. Jesus welcomes them all. The simplicity, the vulnerability, the openness, and complete trust of a small child. It is for such as these that the Kingdom of God belongs.

Poem

God's Blessing of Love by Tom Zart

Where would we be without God's blessing of love

Lonely, miserable, desperate and sad.
Love provides purpose for both body and soul
And gives reason to be thankful and glad.

Love teaches trust, fear, honor and respect
For all we wish to retain and not lose.
The choices we make can last a lifetime
So, we must stay cautious of what we choose.

Everyone needs love for its impact and fulfillment
No love breeds desperation, disappointment and tears.
As love transforms how we think, act and respond
We validate our feelings by our fears.



Prayer

In our time of prayer, there will be a short period of silence for your own individual prayer to God. Let us pray.

Loving God, we give thanks for your goodness and love towards us: for the joy of home and family, for the companionship of friends and neighbours, for all who have shown kindness to us and who have gone the extra mile especially during this pandemic.

We give thanks for the strength that supports us and the love that surrounds us, both when our joy is complete and when it is touched by pain. This day our prayers are for all who hurt and especially for the people suffering from the latest tragedies around the world.

We pray for people everywhere grieving the loss of their family, neighbours stricken by the loss of friends, knowing we cannot support them in the way we would like.

We pray for those who today are on the road to recovery after illness and those who work to save lives, and help on that road, rekindling the embers of hope that all have a future.

Loving God, our prayers this day are for all who strive for peace and for all those who are especially fearful this day, those who do not know which way to turn, those who fear being unjustly blamed. For all those discriminated against, judged, and persecuted, for the colour of their skin, their lifestyle, their gender, for whom they love. May we, here, be different and show the way for others to follow.

Our prayers this day are for those who have no place to lay their heads, and who wonder what tomorrow holds, those who long for your healing from trauma, those whose differences prevent them from seeing who is their neighbour or being tied by rules which mean that common humanity no longer matters.

Thank you too for the memories of those whom we have loved, the recollections of kindnesses shown to us, and we name them all before you now. We name them in the stillness and the silence.

Gracious God, accept these, our prayers, our being, our doing, so that we might be neighbours to others, friend, and stranger. One and all. Always.
Amen.

Benediction

May the love of Jesus Christ
bring us wholeness,
the grace of God the Father
grant us peace,
the breath of Holy Spirit
instil passion
and the unity between them
give us strength
for this and every day. Amen

Announcements

Our online worship, however, you may access it is here for you whenever you need it. We know things are changing slowly but this part of our worship remains. This new is more familiar and we thank you for sharing in it with us.

Each week you can find us here or online at nkchurch.org.uk where you can engage with us in different ways. The church website and bulletin will keep you updated with all the latest news and projects that New Kilpatrick are engaging in.

A special thank you to Ruth Gettinby, who shared in our time together to make this podcast. Until we meet again next week, goodbye for now.

Music