

**ORPHIR and STENNESS CHURCH**  
**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup>. July 2022; Proper 10C**  
**Service Transcript**

**Ed. 10.07.22**

**Introduction - Nicol**

**Introduction and Prayer**

Good morning. It's good to see you again. Welcome to our worship. Wherever you come from today, your presence enriches us all in this time of fellowship and celebration together. Today we read part of an encouraging letter from Paul to the church at Colossae, and we think again about the well-known story of the Good Samaritan

In a moment of quietness, let us let go of the cares and the worries of the past week, and know the presence of God among us.

*Pause ....*

**Prayer**

To you, O God, we offer our prayers. In you, O God, we trust.  
Teach us your ways, O Lord; make them known to us.  
*(Roots; based on Psalm 25)*

**Call to Worship:**

Let us join together to worship God,  
the source of all love, compassion, and justice,  
as we seek to become fit to do God's will in the world.

**1<sup>st</sup>. Hymn: 100** O Lord thou art my God and King

**Opening Prayer and Lord's Prayer**

As we draw near to our God, God of parable and God of truth,  
may our ears be opened to hear his word, our hearts opened to receive his truth,  
our eyes opened to discern our neighbours' need.

We come conscious of our own shortcomings,  
seeking the humility to walk back where we have walked by;  
to embrace where we have turned aside, and to trust where we have been afraid.

We offer to God those times when concern for our own inconvenience  
has prevented us from responding to the needs of others;  
times when, preoccupied with our responsibilities and our busy agenda,  
we have ignored the call of our neighbour, ignored the call of our God,  
and have passed by on the other side.

Knowing that the love of God recognises no boundaries,  
rejoicing that there are no limits to his compassion,  
and that he is never too busy to hear our prayers,  
we seek his pardon and his peace.

As we reflect on the parable of the Good Samaritan,  
we rejoice at the promise of a kingdom where there is no division, and no fear.  
We pray that we may have the compassion of the Good Samaritan,  
that, in giving, we may also receive from the abundance of the boundless generosity of our  
loving God;  
and that we may be blessed by the all-inclusive love  
that Jesus came to proclaim and to embody.

We pray in his name, and we pray together in his words, saying,  
*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, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.*

**Readings: Maureen will read for us today:**

**1st Reading:**

**Colossians 1:1-14; (NRSVA)**

***Paul Thanks God for the Colossians***

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the saints and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ in Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. You have heard of this hope before in the word of the truth, the gospel that has come to you. Just as it is bearing fruit and growing in the whole world, so it has been bearing fruit among yourselves from the day you heard it and truly comprehended the grace of God. This you learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow-servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, and he has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

For this reason, since the day we heard it, we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God. May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

**2nd Reading:**

**Luke 10: 25-37: (NRSVA)**

***The Parable of the Good Samaritan***

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he said, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What do you read there?' He answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.' And he said to him, 'You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.'

But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' Jesus replied, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend." Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'

*Amen. Thanks be to God.*

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Hymn 181 For the beauty of the earth

### Message:

The parable of the Good Samaritan is one of the best-loved stories that Jesus ever told. We've all heard it, and we know the usual explanations. '*The good Samaritan*' has become part of our language, indeed has changed the meaning of the word 'Samaritan' in modern English. To be a Good Samaritan is shorthand for being involved in voluntary public service, like helping every week in the Café, extending a helping hand to folk who are having a bad time, and so on. There are Good Samaritans in this congregation.

We all know about '*The Samaritans*' whose job is to help people in direst need. All this is very different from the meaning of the word Samaritan in Jesus's day. This isn't the time to try to explain the bitter hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans that had gone on for hundreds of years, and is still reflected in the tensions between Israel and Palestine today.

The road from Jericho was well known as a dangerous road with plenty of places for robbers to lurk ready to strike. (Tom Wright, 127)

The story itself, of course, is a parable, made up by Jesus on the spot to illustrate a point. Whether or not Jesus founded the story on someone he knew doesn't matter. A lawyer comes to Jesus with a deceptively simple question: '*What must I do to inherit eternal life?*' He already knows the simple answer: it comes from the Torah, and he is familiar with what it says, so when Jesus replies to his question with more questions, "*What is written in the law? What do you read there?*" he is able to recite the answer straight away: '*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.*'

Simple: except this man wants a complicated answer, so that he can show how clever he is. He has anticipated that Jesus would produce a long formula, with lots of boxes to tick. He reckons that he ticks most of the boxes already, but he wants it to be public knowledge. He wants everybody, especially Jesus, to know how good he is. He expects Jesus to say, 'Well done! Why can't everybody be like you?' Maybe we know people like that. Maybe we are people like that.

So he asks for clarification: "Who is my neighbour?"

Back to the people in the story.

The unnamed traveller must have been foolish or reckless to be travelling alone on a road notoriously dangerous for travellers, where people usually travelled in groups for safety. You *could* say that he brought his troubles on himself. Does that make a difference?

I remember hearing a man comment on a story of how a mountain-rescue team, at considerable risk to themselves, had saved an injured climber: "I would have left him there! His own fault! Putting others at risk!" I wonder if the same attitude would deny medical treatment to those suffering from alcohol or drug abuse, or from diseases associated with smoking, or dietary excess, or sexually-transmitted diseases. The rescuers don't discriminate. Neither does God.

Next, the priest and the Levite. We shouldn't immediately write them off as the baddies: their decision to pass by on the other side would have been no surprise to Jesus's hearers. The victim was 'half dead', maybe actually dead, and priests were forbidden to go near a dead body.

They were following the usual way for religious people to deal with a situation like this. Maybe the priest was sorry for the man, but to touch a dead man meant that he would be ritually unclean and unable to take his turn in the ritual of the temple worship. More than his job was worth. For him, ceremonial ritual came before the claims of humanity.

Maybe we know people like that – people who need to keep up appearances. Maybe we are people like that.

The *Levite* took a closer look before hurrying away. Maybe he would have liked to help, but it was too risky: bandits often used decoys – one of them pretended to be injured and waited for some unsuspecting traveller to come to help, at which his mates would rush out and mug him. Safety first! He would take no risks to help somebody else. Understandable? Or not?

Then the Samaritan. He might not have been racially Samaritan at all – the Jews used the name as a term of abuse for people who didn't observe the orthodox Jewish religion. But – *a major point of the story* - Jesus's choice of a Samaritan, the ultimate outsider, to help the victim, must have horrified his hearers.

At the end of the story, Jesus asks:

"Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?"

The lawyer answers: "The one who showed him mercy". He, a devout Jew, has to acknowledge that the despised Samaritan is the one who shows all the qualities of a good neighbour. God's interest and care and love are not limited to any individuals, any race, any religious group.

We can all imagine ourselves as the Good Samaritan who helps people in trouble. But can you admit to yourself that you have been – might still be – the one who passed by on the other side?

Or can we identify with the victim in the ditch? Realise that we may be in need of help, possibly from someone we think of as an outsider, someone we don't hold in high regard? Possibly because of our own fault or foolishness?

Can you see yourself as the innkeeper? Can you think of somebody in trouble, and hear the words of the Samaritan: "*Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.*"

The Jews called Jesus a Samaritan as a term of abuse. Maybe we should interpret these words of the Good Samaritan as Jesus speaking to us.

Can you recognize the Samaritan as Christ, the ultimate helper, who sees, has compassion for, and restores the beaten, naked figure whom the religious figures, the Goodies, have ignored?

And the lawyer who asked the questions? We never hear the end of his story. How would his story have ended for you?

When you go home, read the story again. Think yourself into each of the parts. Ask yourself what it means to you. In the story the good guys act badly, while the worst – the detested Samaritan - acts well.

Jesus meant his parables to *challenge* us to reverse our expectations and our judgements, to think hard about social and racial prejudices, about cultural presumptions, and even about our own deep-rooted religious beliefs and traditions. The story *challenges* us to think hard about our attitude to Jesus, and our attitude to other people. *To see ourselves as God sees us.*

The example of Jesus shines out from the pages of the New Testament and from the lives of countless people who have devoted their lives to following him. His challenge is to make the kingdom of God a reality among us. His example, and his challenge, are there for us just as they were for his hearers nearly two thousand years ago.

This wonderful story has many more lessons – about human nature, and self-interest, and prejudice and all the rest - but the basic take-home message is clear.

**What Jesus says to the lawyer at the conclusion of the story he says also to us: 'Go and do likewise.'**

How do you respond to Jesus's instruction? Don't tell me. Tell him.  
Amen. Soli Deo Gloria.

**3rd Hymn 544** When I needed a neighbour were you there, were you there?

We come now to the Dedication of our Offering, and continuing into our prayers for others. We think of all the goodness and gifts we have received, and we give a little in return. We think of other people, and of recent events: upheaval in government; war in Ukraine; shooting of innocent people in various parts of the world .....

**Let us pray:**

**Dedication of Offering:**

Lord, everything that we have, and all that we are, come from you.  
Our gifts, our talents, all our possibilities, belong to us  
only because they come direct from you.  
Help us not to take your gifts for granted, not to bury them,  
but rather to use them to make you better known  
to the people around us and to the people of the world. Amen.

**In our Prayers for the World in which we live I invite you to join in responses:**

**L:** Lord, hear us.

**All: Lord, graciously hear us.**

Holy and ever-loving God,  
you bind up our wounds, you heal our sickness and restore us to wholeness.  
Make us, we pray, sensitive to all those who are in need, or in trouble,  
that we may care for the suffering and may be compassionate in all our dealings.  
We pray for governments in Holyrood and in Westminster,  
for those in authority throughout the world,  
that they may act at all times with honesty, integrity and sincerity,  
and with compassion for all who depend upon them;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**L:** Lord, hear us.

**All: Lord, graciously hear us.**

Thank you for all those who have given us help in our difficult times;  
who have supported us, protected us, encouraged us.  
We pray that your church may seek out and recover the fallen;  
that we, in our lives, may not pass by on the other side.  
We pray today for the homeless, and for the work of city missions, the Samaritans, Street Pastors; the Salvation Army, and all the others.

**L:** Lord, hear us.

**All: Lord, graciously hear us.**

We pray for all who have fallen among thieves;  
all who are robbed of their possessions, or their well-being, or their self-respect.  
We pray for people suffering because of war;  
people who have lost loved ones; possessions; means of livelihood;  
driven from home and country dependent on others.  
We pray especially for the people of Ukraine: may this war be brought to an end.

We remember too the people of Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, Somalia, and many other countries.

We pray for people affected by natural disasters;  
the serious flooding in Bangladesh and many other places.

**L:** Lord, hear us.

**All: Lord, graciously hear us.**

Remember, O God, those who today lie bleeding in the gutters of our society;  
bleeding from the wounds of broken relationships and lost dreams;  
broken by past wrongs and present hurts: all who long for compassion, love and healing.  
Remember those who feel that the Church has turned its back  
and does not want to know, or understand, or care.

**L:** Lord, hear us.

**All: Lord, graciously hear us.**

Bless, O God, those who *do* stop to tend and care and love;  
for all who look after our well-being, protect us, and seek to supply our needs:  
our health service; carers, doctors and nurses;  
for those who watch at bedsides in hospitals and in hospices;  
those who wait anxiously by telephones.  
We give thanks for the work of the emergency services.  
Bless the fire service, ambulance workers, paramedics, police, social workers.

We pray for all known to us who are ill, or in difficulty or trouble at this time;  
the lonely, the worried the sad; those close to death.

We remember with thanksgiving our loved ones and those of our community  
who are in your keeping in the fullness of eternal life.

We bring before you all those for whom we have special concerns.

*Pause....*

**L:** Lord, hear us.

**All: Lord, graciously hear us.**

All our prayers we bring in the name of Jesus. Amen.

**Choir:**

**'Tailpiece':**

Clarence Jordan, who died in 1969, was an American farmer and New Testament Greek scholar. He founded Koinonia Farm, a religious community in Georgia, USA. He was the author of the *Cotton Patch paraphrase of the New Testament*, which sets out to translate the *events* of Scripture, rather than the *words*. This extract may not be 'politically correct'. He wrote this:

"We need to have [translations] in our tongue and our time. We want to be *participants* in the faith not merely spectators. In the story of the Good Samaritan, we need to participate in the story, so we change Jerusalem and Jericho to New York to Boston - or our hometown to the next. Change the setting from 1st century Palestine to 20th century America."

In the current focus on systemic racism, instead of a lawyer testing Jesus, we have a teacher of an adult Bible class who asks the question, "*Who is my neighbour?*"

Then Jesus laid into him and said, "A man was going from Atlanta to Albany and some gangsters held him up. When they had robbed him of his wallet and brand-new suit, they beat him up and drove off in his car, leaving him unconscious on the shoulder of the highway. Now it just so happened that a white preacher was going down that same highway. When he saw the fellow, he stepped on the gas and went scooting by. Shortly afterwards a white

Gospel song leader came down the road, and when he saw what had happened, he too stepped on the gas. Then, a black man travelling that way came upon the fellow, and what he saw moved him to tears. He stopped and bound up his wounds as best he could, drew some water from his water-jug to wipe away the blood, and then laid him on the back seat. He drove on into Albany and took him to the hospital and said to the nurse, 'You all take good care of this white man I found on the Highway. Here's the only two dollars I got, but you all keep account of what he owes, and if he can't pay it, I'll settle up with you when I make a pay-day.'

"Now if you had been the man held up by the gangsters, which of these three—the white preacher, the white song leader, or the black man—would you consider to have been your neighbour?" The teacher of the adult Bible class said, "Why, of course, the nig—[nnnn nice man] I mean, er ... well, er ... the one who treated me kindly." Jesus said, "Well, then, you get going and start living like that!"  
(*Clarence Jordan: Cotton Patch Gospel*)

**Hymn 132** Immortal, Invisible

**Blessing**

Lord, send us out to share the wine of kindness with those who are lonely;  
to offer the oil of compassion; to those who are hurting;  
to cross boundaries of comfort, and to greet all as our neighbour in your name.  
And the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be with you, and remain with you,  
now and always. Amen.

.....  
**Doxology:** Hy 786 (Tune: Ae Fond Kiss)  
.....