



Order of Service



11 September 2022
10 am



Worship led by:
Rev Dr AJ Groenewald
Musicians:
Martin Petty and choir

Gathering of God's People

Time when we greet one another and prepare for worship.

Those who are able please stand for the entry of the Bible.

Words of welcome and announcements.

Good morning

Welcome to our service of worship. Welcome to Helen who is the Project Lead for Valley Friends, from St Mungos Church. She will be addressing us after the sermon on her work in the Pentland valley.

May I please ask that we all stand and for a minute of silent reflection thank God for the life of Queen Elizabeth the second who passed away on Thursday ...

There will be an opportunity for you all to sign a book of condolences at the tea after the worship service in the hall.

I am also intending to open the church building during this week to allow people to come in and reflect and pray ...

Next week the Guild will be conducting the worship and read a sermon from me. I am getting facial surgery on Thursday to remove the Basel cell carcinoma on my cheek and will be in recovery by next Sunday...

Worshipping God Together

Call to worship

Minister: “Come, follow me,” Jesus said,
 “and I will send you out to fish for
 people.”

**ALL: We will follow your command,
 Lord.**

**Beloved I greet you in the Name of God the
Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen**

CH4 352

O for a thousand tongues to sing

Opening prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Let us pray:

Gracious God,

We pray, Lord, for all who are lost:

We have to confess today that a lot of us may be
feeling like lost sheep after losing our Queen,

We thank you for her life of faith and obedience
to you,

We pray for her family and all those who have lost loved ones.

We ask that those who mourn may know your comfort;

that those whose families are broken may know your closeness.

Lord, in your mercy:

hear our prayer

Lord, you sat at the same table as sinners.

No one was an outcast from your hospitality and love.

We gather before you today, an ill-assorted bunch,

all sinners but welcomed by you.

Thank you, generous, searching Lord
for seeking out and saving us.

Lord, we confess that we forget our status.
Independent and worldly-wise,
we forget that you have sought us.
Like lost property, we sunk in darkness
until the light of your love shone upon us.
Forgive us our pride and short-sightedness, we
pray in the name of Jesus
We ask this in the name of Jesus who taught us to
pray:

ALL: 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.

Reflecting on God's Word

Reading: Luke 15:1-10

Reader: George Burt

**Choir sings "There were ninety and nine that were safely laid" by
Ira Sankey vs 1,2 and 5**

Sermon#

On Thursday when Queen Elizabeth died it was such a great shock to everyone, whether you are a royalist or republican. In one second everything seemed to change – and everyone in the United Kingdom and the even the rest of the world felt different than the second before...

To summarise the mood, one could say: everyone felt a wee bit lost... A great cedar in Lebanon has fallen and is no more. The ONE big tree who has provided shadow for many is no more ... the branches who reached into the hearts and homes and all governments is no more ..

So what so we make of it all ...

We do what Queen Elizabeth taught us. We go to God's Word and we listen to HIM!

So let us do that, in remembering that God's word was her guiding light all through her life.

We heard **two parables** which are connected by theme (**the joy of the lost being found**) and by key words (**"lost"** and "found," "rejoice" and "celebrate,").

Jesus told the parables to tell the Pharisees and the teachers of the law that **God loves the sinners** but hate sin. They did not like Jesus' fellowship with

sinners and tax collectors. Tax collectors and sinners were excluded from the religious community. Tax collectors were a despised group of Jewish people who collected taxes for the government at a profit. Usually, they did not show any mercy on their clients. The people were convinced that they collaborated with the occupying pagan Roman power. The sinners could have been anybody that was regarded as unclean such as people with disabilities, those who worked with animal skins, Gentile foreigners and women.

Pharisees and legal teachers did not consider it proper to eat with those excluded from the religious community; besides such dangers as eating unclean food, intimate table fellowship meant acceptance.

And then the most shocking part is when Jesus tells the parables in the first two instances he uses “sinners” as his main characters namely a woman and a shepherd. They were regarded as unclean. But Jesus drives the point home - God’s love and mercy is for everyone and His love is always inclusive, something the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law could not understand. We even know that during this time the Jews had a frequently quoted prayer “Blessed be God that he has not made me a woman” (Scott 1990:312).

In the two parables that we read the words seems similar and intended to have the same meaning. In the first parable it is about a sheep that walked away from the rest while the second is about a

lifeless object who did not have a lot of worldly value. It is interesting to note that the relative value of the lost item increases in each parable: one out of one **hundred**, one out of **ten** and finally one out of **two**.

But although the one drachma as it is written in the Greek text is not much in worldly standards, personally it meant a lot to the woman. It was most likely part of her **ketubah, or dowry**—the only money she brings into the marriage that is **technically hers even if the marriage is dissolved**. One drachma was about equal to a day's wage. It suggests that her father's family was quite poor.

The lamp here is a small, hand-held oil lamp, which emits little light but is more helpful than the small

(if any) window that may be in her wall. The rough stone floors of poor homes had many narrow cracks between the stones, into which coins and fragments of pottery fell so often. By sweeping with a broom she might hope to hear the coin rattle against the floor.

According to Jewish tradition the angels in heaven generally took great interest in God's workings on earth; each person was specifically assigned at least one guardian angel.

Now Jesus drives the point home: God's mercy seeks out all those in any circumstance, who are lost!

It is remarkable that Luke is the only Gospel writer who actually tells us three stories with the same theme: **lost and found**. The first parable and the last one, which we did not read are similar in the sense that **both the sheep and the prodigal son** were lost because of **their own doing**. But the second one is different in the sense that the coin is not a **living animal or being**. IT just got lost as any **other objects often do**.

So I think the true emphasis and message lies to me in the second parable. **It is as if it is sandwiched** between the other two for a reason.

It is quite hard to make sense of the second parable in as much as it is all about a lifeless object who cannot be blamed or held responsible for being lost. In verse 10 the writer interprets the one coin as referring to “one sinner who repents” .

If we take into consideration the context of the word “sinner” then something fascinating becomes apparent. The Jews considered anyone who is not a Jew, and anyone who according to them are unclean like I illustrated in the explanation of the background, a sinner. So it can mean that the coin represents the Gentiles and all those who are “unclean”. But bearing in mind - it is not their fault. It is not as if they deliberately chose to be born as disabled, as woman, as foreign Gentiles!

So what is the writer of Luke trying to tell us?

There are people who cannot help that they are lost.

There are people who do not understand the Gospel message of God's loving forgiveness for the sinner. There are people who grew up without the strong foundations of faith. There are people who do not know the comfort of knowing the presence of the Lord. There are people who needs believers to convince them through deeds of love and forgiveness that there is a God who cares.

And yes, sometimes even those who have faith, can get lost because of personal circumstances.

Sometimes the faithful do get lost not because of their own doing or choice. Sometimes when illness comes knocking on our doors, it does make us feel as if we have lost our direction and focus in life. Sometimes when we face a life-threatening challenging situation, people have said that it feels like their foundation has been taken away. Sometimes when our loved ones die, then it is possible to feel like a lost wee soul in the vast emptiness of grief and bereavement, which sums up the mood in our country at the moment!

And in all these cases, we are lost just like the drachma.

But just like the parable demonstrates , God's love and mercy is greater than our own desperate

situations. God's love is visible in the many cards, flowers, letters and people who genuinely wants to help. God's mercy is visible in the way people help us to get through our trials and tribulations, in practical ways beyond our reason and understanding.

And every time when we do get through ignorance and the dark valleys of illness, bereavement and loss, God our Father rejoices in heaven!

I am sorry but I do not know about you, but this knowledge makes me tearful, to think that the Almighty God cares so much about us that He seeks out those who are lost and He is actually happy when we are "found" or "whole" again. To think

that the Almighty God, the creator of heaven and earth bothers about us!

So the big question is: if God bothers so much about us - why can we not be bothered about all those people in the world – more specifically in the Pentlands, who are alone and lonely, who need the steady hands of a friend

There is no reason for anyone in this world to be “lost” anymore. You and I have a huge responsibility. We must reach out to each and every person who does not know the presence of God. We must take care of those who are lost and alone because of illness, bereavement and brokenness. But we must take great care of our

own lives of faith too - because we can get lost as well. We do not live in glass houses.

If you are sitting in this church this morning and you feel that you are in a place where you should not be, remember that God will seek you until He finds you.

If you are sitting in this church and you cannot find your way back, the Lord God is here and He knows everything about you. He will find a way to help you find your way again.

If you are sitting in the church and you feel that you do not have the emotional energy or the ability to return – the presence of God is coming to you.

If you are sitting in the church and **you feel lost** because no-one loves you - the love and mercy of God will search for you until He finds you wherever you are.

Wherever you are in your journey of faith, always remembers the powerful message of the two parables in the words of Jesus:

“I tell you that in the same way there will be more **rejoicing in heaven** over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.”

May have the share the mercy of God's forgiving love everywhere we go and may we all be worthy instruments in His hand – **reaching out**, bringing the **healing love** to those who are lost, bringing **wholeness in a broken world!** Amen

CH4 532

Lord you have come to the seashore

Practical application of “Seeking those who are lonely” - Helen Yewdall

Responding to God’s word

Prayer of thanksgiving: Lesley Burt

CH4 559

There is a redeemer

Benediction

Receive the blessing of God and go in peace:

In the knowledge that you have been found,
go now and seek the lost, helping to bring them
home.

And the blessing of God almighty,

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

Be with you all

Now and for evermore

Sung Amen, Amen, Amen

Martin plays God save our King...

PRAYER

Thank you, God, for love we share,
thank you, God, for signs of care,
thank you, God, for being there.
Thank you, God, that love is the way,
thank you, God, that hope will stay,
thank you, God, that faith can sway
our hearts to know your truth.

Amen.

You are invited to stay for tea and coffee which are served in the hall



BALERNO PARISH CHURCH

Intimations

Sunday, 11 September 2022

WORSHIP SERVICES

18 September 2022 @ 10 am Guid service
25 September 2022 @ 10 am Worship service
2 October 2022 @ 10 am **Harvest** Worship service

9 October 2022@ 10 am Worship service
16 October 2022@ 10 am Worship service

Walk the Kiltwalk in 2022 for FRESH START

The Kiltwalk returns to Edinburgh on Sunday, 18th September - 3 different distances. Team Balerno will once again take part, raising funds for FRESH START. If you would like to join the team, please get in touch. Sandra Lyall, 449 4375 or sandralyall@hotmail.com



THE MILL CAFÉ

Open Tuesday – Friday, 9.30am – 2pm

Serving teas/coffees, home baking, snack lunches.

We are a friendly group and are *always delighted to welcome new volunteers to our team*. Pop in and see what we are all about.

THANKS TO YOU...

Thank you for all your generous contributions towards the ministry and mission of the Church. Gift Aid envelopes are available in the wallets at the end of each row.

Sort code 83 - 19 - 15
Account 00119731
Balerno Church of Scotland