



Order of Service



16 October 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. I hope you are well.

Please read the intimations. If u need the services of a minister in the next few weeks, please contact the Session clerk who will be able to show u the way.

All the services are intimated ...

The Funeral of Isabel Dickson will take place in Balerno church on the 25th October at 2 pm.

Worshipping God Together

Call to worship

Minister: When we pray, God hears us;
 when the time is right, God
 responds.

 When we pray, God knows our
 needs;
 when his time is right, God meets
 our needs.

**ALL: Let us come to God in prayer
now.**

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

CH4 Lord, speak to me, that I may speak

Opening prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Let us pray:

Lord, thank you that you are our place of help.
Where others fail us and circumstances change,
you remain and you are unchanging.
Your love supports us, underpinning us
with a strength beyond ourselves.
We praise you for your passion for justice,
for your kindness towards your people.
We thank you that you call us
to a life-giving existence,
that we may give and receive
in your name, learning your ways
and caring for your world.

Lord, forgive us when we have closed our eyes
to the things that matter,

when we have prioritised the trivial surface matters
over urgent needs and deep-seated injustice.
Forgive us when we have chosen to look away from those who need us the most.
Forgive us when we have stretched ourselves so thin
that we do not have time and energy
for that which you call us to do and to be.
Forgive us and restore us, we pray.
Lord in your mercy,
Give us what we need to live, love and pray persistently ...

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.

CH4 556

I need thee every hour

Reflecting on God's Word

Reading: Luke 18.1-8

Reader: Margaret Forsyth

18 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should **always pray** and **not give up**. [And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;] ² He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. ³ And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.'

⁴ "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually come and attack me!'" [lest by her continual coming she weary me.]

⁶ And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷ And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? ⁸ I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?" Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

Choir sings: "Such Love" by Graham Kendrick

Sermon

I wonder who can tell me what the definition of GOSSIP is?

Your reaction is priceless ... and funny at the same time..

Google says "Gossip is casual or unconstrained conversation or reports about other people, typically involving details that are not confirmed as being true".

Usually - one is helpless when something that is not TRUE is made to BE true just by the sheer volume of other people talking about it.

Let us do an experiment... I am going to whisper something to each side starting at the back ... and then I would like you all to whisper it to the one sitting next to you or on the next row...

Then when the message reaches the front, I will ask the last person to please repeat the message ...

It seems the definition according to GOOGLE is very true ... when the message reaches person ABC or D the initial untruth being told is only multiplied...

I know today's reading is just a parable but I do wonder if the widow did not face something similar...

In our passage Jesus made a sweeping statement about prayer and to illustrate it he told a parable. But this parable is rather shocking.

According to the parable the Judge who is a man of great honour in his society, acts in a shameful way by not respecting or honouring God or care for his fellow human beings. He is supposed to be standing in God's place looking after the widows, the orphans and the strangers. He was elected to defend the vulnerable in his society.

And then in almost the exact words, Jesus said there was a widow who came to the judge and asked him to help her. She acted in quite a shameful manner too by not addressing him properly and not acknowledging his position not to help her.

She was persistent in her efforts to get his help. In Jesus' time the widows, the orphans and the strangers were a special group of people and strict rules applied to everyone who tried to harm them.

In the parable it is also quite interesting to learn that although the judge **do not fear God** that he feared the widow.

Actually what Luke was implying is that he feared his “honourable name and status in that society”. With no social welfare state benefits, child allowances and tax credits, the widows, the orphans and the strangers faced difficult times. No wonder the widow was so persistent in her cause.

But in the parable the judge fails his task. He refused to help the widow and only after she kept stalking him, he finally helps - not because he wanted to.

His actions were not directed by honour, or a sense of fair justice and compassion. So what is the parable saying? According to our parable the judge is the insider and the widow the outsider – someone who did not have any status and was helpless.

But it is not the insider to whom justice belongs to but to the outsider. It is the outsider that will inherit the kingdom of God through her persistent faith.

The parable's main emphasis lies in the actions of the widow "who kept coming to him, "For some time" "keeps bothering him, "so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming".

The widow's shameful actions through her intrusion in the judge's social space and her continual persistence brings about justification!

Likewise is the kingdom of heaven a coming reality, and ONE who keeps bothering/almost plaguing people regardless of their honour, or social status.

Jesus' last words emphasised exactly this. When the Son of man comes to earth will he find the shameful unjust actions of the judge or the faith of the widow among his people?

God will give justice to all those who constantly ask him. He is the fair and faithful judge who always looks with compassion at his people. In a sense our reading is not a parable at all. It is an anti-parable with the whole emphasis on the fact that God is totally different from the unjust judge.

In our reading a few things are clear: First and foremost God is totally different from any human being and in particular from the unjust judge.

God is faithful and compassionate and always interacts with people in a gracious and merciful way. Unlike the human judge who did not even have compassion for the plea of the most desperate in their society, God chose to give his only Son to redeem the sinners.

God did not turn his face away. Unlike the judge, God hears the requests of his children the first time. He answers - not because He is obliged to do so, or to defend his honor or because He is harassed by all our prayers.

No He answers because he loves us just as we are. Our reading also emphasizes the lack of a meaningful relationship between the two parties. They did not relate to one another which resulted in the judge not being able to know the situation of the widow and the widow oblivious to the airs and graces of the judge.

To pray is to speak to God in conversation. But we need to have a living relationship with God to be able to speak to Him. And relationships always have tensions. So it is only natural that we will “wrestle” with God in prayer.

Prayer is not a matter of manipulating God to do my will — it is a **conversation with God** in which I discover his care and his will, and where I discover what He wants of me.

Prayer is an open conversation where the possibilities are endless. God can either change what I am asking for or change me in the course of speaking to Him.

AND let us face it – we can **never gossip** about/of God – He is everywhere...He knows everything we say and even what we do not want to say ...

We need faith to know whom we are serving. Faith that -because we believe in the redemption of Jesus Christ – will enable us to go to God with all our worries, trials and tribulation. The widow is our ultimate example of perseverance and

commitment. If she could keep going back to such an horrible judge, how much more reason to we need to keep going to God who is loving, forgiving and merciful.

We need to persevere and do what we can to speak to God – missing no opportunity which brings me to the following true story:

Margaret Sangster Phippen wrote that in the mid-1950's her father, British minister W.E. Sangster, began to notice some uneasiness in his throat and a dragging in his leg. When he went to the doctor, he found that he had an incurable disease that caused progressive muscular atrophy.

His muscles would gradually waste away, his voice would fail, and his throat would soon become unable to swallow. Sangster threw himself into his work in the British home missions, figuring he could still write and have even more time for prayer.

"Let me stay in the struggle Lord," he pleaded. "I don't mind if I can no longer be a general, but give me just a regiment to lead."

He wrote articles and books, and helped organize prayer cells throughout England. "I'm only in the kindergarten of suffering," he told people who pitied him. Gradually Sangsters's legs became useless. His voice went completely. But he could still hold a pen, shakily.

On Easter morning, just a few weeks before he died, he wrote a letter to his daughter. In it, he said, "It is terrible to wake up on Easter morning and have no voice to shout, "He is risen!" -- but it would be still more terrible to have a voice and not want to shout."

To end the sermon I would like to read the poem by James Montgomery:

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the burden of a sigh
The falling of a tear
The upward glancing of an eye

When none but God is near.

Prayer is the simplest form of speech That infant lips
can try;
Prayer the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high.

Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice, Returning from his
ways,
While angels in their songs rejoice And cry, 'Behold,
he prays!'

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath, The Christian's
native air;
His watchword at the gates of death,
He enters rest with prayer.

The saints in prayer appear as one, In word, and
deed, and mind, While with the Father and the
Son Sweet fellowship they find.

No prayer is made by man alone The Holy Spirit
pleads,
And Jesus, on th'eternal throne, For sinners
intercedes.

O Thou, by whom we come to God, The Life, the
Truth, the Way,
The path of prayer Thyself hast trod -

Lord, teach us how to pray.

Amen

CH4 Just as I am, without one plea

Responding to God's word

Prayer of thanksgiving: Lesley Burt

CH4 What a friend we have in Jesus

Benediction Receive the blessing of God and go in peace:

Lord our God,

you promise to stay awake,

you protect us,

you hear all of our prayers,

you want us to keep talking to you.

You are God of everything and

we look up to you.

Bless us as we trust in you.

Send us out to live and work and pray.

We ask this in the Name of God the Father, the

Son and the Holy Spirit.

Sung Amen, Amen, Amen

PRAYER

Lord Jesus,
we are sorry for giving up when praying is hard,
and prayers aren't answered.
Help us to trust your faithful love,
and to continue to give all our concerns
into your care.
Amen.

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



BALERNO PARISH CHURCH

Intimations

Sunday, 9 October 2022

WORSHIP SERVICES

23 October 2022 @ 10 am Worship service
30 October 2022 @ 10 am Worship service
6 November 2022 @ 10 am Communion service
6 November 2022 @ 3 pm Communion service

PASTORAL COVER 17/10/22-7/11/22

While the Minister is away for the October break, please contact the session clerk Malcolm Ogilvie or the Rev Dean Batchelor on 07450655834.



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.

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Balerno Church of Scotland