



Order of Service



30 July 2023
10 am



Worship led by:
Rev Dr André Groenewald
Organist Martin and choir

Gathering of God's People

Words of welcome and announcements.

Please stand for the Bible to enter the sanctuary.

Call to worship (Psalm 119:132-133)

Minister: Turn to me and have mercy on me,
as you always do to those who love your name.

**All: Direct my footsteps according to your word;
let no sin rule over me.**

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

CH4 641 Seek ye first the kingdom of God.

Opening prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Let us pray:

Loving God,

thank you for the wonder of our

interconnected universe,

sustained and held in being by your love.

Tiny seeds nurtured by earth, that grow into

great scrubs,

sheltering creatures.

Barely visible yeast cultures leavening flour
for bread.

Treasures that make life precious and joyful.

Wisdom handed down to us, freshly
understood.

Your reign breaks in around us in so many
ways;

help us to see and rejoice.

Lord, we confess that the concerns of the
world weigh us down.

We worry about our needs, our wants, how
others perceive us.

We are so overwhelmed that we fail to riddle
the gold from life's dross.

We turn to you, seeking the assurance that
your kingdom is with us and among us;
help us to discern where it lies, so that we
may turn our backs on all else.

Grant us the patience to seek you and your
ways
with the forbearance you show as you wait
for us.

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.

Choir sings "Grace is when God gives us the things we don't deserve"
- Paul Crouch & David Mudie.

Reflecting on God's Word

Reading: Matthew 13:33-35.

Reader: David Booth.

CH4 543

Longing for light, we wait in darkness.

Sermon

The text for the sermon is verse 33: "He told them still another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough."

When reading the parable at first it seemed to me that the meanings was simple: To have faith is to change like yeast changes the shape of the dough.

However, when I looked closely at the Greek text and considered the background of the Gospel of Matthew the meaning became much more unnoticed than I suspected it to be.

So what is the context of the Gospel of Matthew? Scholars generally agree that the Gospel of Matthew was written to a Jewish audience who converted to Christendom. They were people who knew the Old Testament texts and all the Jewish ritual laws by heart. It is no wonder that Matthew speaks in our reading of this morning of the

kingdom of heavens instead of the kingdom of God because of the Jewish fear of misusing the name of God. Heavens, always in the plural form, is also a typical Jewish expression of the place where God lives.

So let us turn to our text now: He says the kingdom of heavens is like yeast that a woman took and concealed in three measures of flour until it was all leavened.

Again, Jesus is referring to the ritual cleansing taboos of his society. Woman was generally associated with the unclean, the religious impure. Now this woman takes the yeast and concealed it into three measures of flour. The use of leaven was

strictly forbidden in all offerings made to the Lord by fire according to Lev. 2:11.

Three measures refer to Old Testament:

- When Abraham received three guests at Oaks of Mamre, he ordered Sarah to make cakes of three measures flour.
- WHEN the Angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon he prepared unleavened flour of three measures of flour and a goat as an offering to God,
- When Hanna dedicated Samuel to the temple, among her offerings were three measures of flour;

Three measures were much more than the normal but the amount connected with the appearance of God. “Until all was leavened – the end of the

process, the rising of the dough, which represents the corruption of the leavened bread.

Again, Jesus says: the kingdom of heavens is present among those who are considered as being unworthy by their society. It is present among the marginal. The kingdom of God is for everyone – not only for those they thought to be ritually clean, pure and holy by their laws of society which barred certain people to have a relationship with God.

Jesus was criticizing the rules of his society. He is saying what is impossible for man, is possible for God.

Jesus would show to them and us that He was the only one who could stand in the presence of God facing God with all our sins, faults and misgivings.

He was the only one who made it possible for everyone to be part of the Gods eternal kingdom. He broke down all the barriers that existed between God and humankind.

He made it possible for everyone through faith alone to be citizens of heaven - Even the man who planted the forbidden mustard seed and the woman who dared to put in yeast in an offering to God.

We have a responsibility to think seriously about our faith and our relationship with God. We should consider what our new status to be in Christ means. But many of us, if not all will also feel that we are not worthy to come near the presence of God -hence saying I am not good enough!.

So if you are sitting in this church this morning and you feel that you are not worthy to be in God's presence, or that you are not as "Christian" as most of the others, or not so well groomed or too young or too old, or too poor or too whatever, you are at the right place. Jesus said the kingdom of heavens is for you with just one exception: you must believe that Jesus saved you. You must have

faith. And if you have faith you have hope as well. You are part of God's kingdom. In his eyes you are saved. You are worthy. You are special. You are loved even if you feel not very loved at this present ,moment of time.

He is with you even though you might think He is not.

You must tell others about God's love for all people. You must show to everyone that if you are accepted - so are they! You must live in the weeks to come with this knowledge: everyone who has faith, have received the kingdom of God. May we never ever forget this very reassuring message this morning! AMen

Responding to God's word

Prayer of thanksgiving: Elaine McCullough.

CH4 553

Just as I am.

Benediction Receive the blessing of God and go in peace:

Loving God,
thank you for your reign breaking in, all
around, for those with eyes to see.
May the light of your love be focused within
us.
May we create space in our hearts to treasure
it.
And may we be of service to your love, now
and always.
And the blessing of God Almighty Father Son
and Holy Spirit will be with you now and
forevermore.
Amen

Sung Amen, Amen, Amen.

Please remain standing as The Bible is removed.

THANKS TO YOU... Thank you for all your generous contributions towards the ministry and mission of the Church. Gift

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Balerno Church of Scotland	

Aid envelopes are available at the end of each row or from the Treasurer after the Service.

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

Psalm 119:129-136 www.rootsontheweb.com

This is just one part of the long hymn of praise for God's law that is Psalm 119. Using physical images of panting and streaming tears, the psalmist expresses real passion for God's decrees, and explains why they are so valuable. The law is a protective power that turns aside the attacks of wicked and oppressive people. This is expressed in images of light shining from God's face, scattering the darkness.

A prayer of confession

Lord, we confess that the concerns of the world weigh us down.

We worry about our needs, our wants, how others perceive us.
We are so overwhelmed that we fail to riddle the gold from life's
dross.

We turn to you, seeking the assurance that your kingdom is
with us and among us;
help us to discern where it lies, so that we may turn our backs
on all else.

Grant us the patience to seek you and your ways
with the forbearance you show as you wait for us.

Amen.