

ORMOND UNITING CHURCH



10 JULY 2022
PENTECOST 5



WORSHIP AT HOME

This time is an opportunity to be still, seeking to be aware of the presence of God within.

Carve out a time for this practice; prepare yourself, as you might for a usual Sunday morning and remember that there are others from the congregation gathering at the same time as you. There are also many from the church around the globe who are gathering to seek the presence of God as we are.

Prepare a space in the house; find a comfortable chair, light a candle, turn off distracting noises and close the door if that will help you to be still. This is something that does not need to be hurried.

Prayer for today

Prayer Of Gathering In God's Presence

Confession

We offer God now our prayers of repentance.

We confess to you, living God,

our failure to live as brothers and sisters, and as your children.

We confess to you, loving God,

that we have not loved you as you have loved us.

We confess to you, gracious God,

that we have doubted your word and failed to obey its teaching.

We confess to you, merciful God,

our desire to own you and contain you within our doctrines and theologies.

We confess to you, almighty God,

that we do not acknowledge you as Lord of all the earth.

Forgive us and redeem us for we have not allowed your presence to shine among us.

There are many ways in which we have failed

in our commitment and obedience to our fellow men and women.

We turn towards our neighbors and our friends

and offer them our prayers of repentance.

Declaration of forgiveness

Believe the good news!

God did not send the Son into the world

to condemn the world,

but in order that the world might be saved

through him.

John 3:17

Scripture

Luke 10:25-37

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

25 Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. ‘Teacher,’ he said, ‘what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ 26He said to him, ‘What is written in the law? What do you read there?’ 27He 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.’ 28And he said to him, ‘You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.’

29 But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbour?’ 30Jesus 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. 31Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. 34He 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. 35The 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.” 36Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?’ 37He said, ‘The one who showed him mercy.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Go and do likewise.’

Reflection

We are all familiar with the Parable of the Good Samaritan, and we are familiar with the various people referred to in the story: The Lawyer, the Priest, the Levite, the injured man, the Samaritan and the innkeeper. Not to forget, of course, Jesus who tells the story. And we all remember the two key questions, the first being “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” and the second, “Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers? But the more familiar a story is and the more often that we hear it the more likely we are to let it rush past us. It’s always worth going over it again. Good stories have a way of refreshing themselves in our minds. So, if you have the time and the inclination, may I suggest you re-read the original (above). What do you think about the various people in the story? Who is the hero? Are the baddies as bad as they seem? Is the Samaritan just too good to be true? Some people think that it is the innkeeper that is the real hero. What do you think of that? Have you ever asked yourself what the answers of the two questions are for you. Have times and circumstances change so much that we need to re-cast the story into our own terms. Maybe that is necessary if we are to make sense of the story.

Below I have re-cast the story into contemporary terms. Does it help? Perhaps it just confuses things. I have changed things so that the story is ‘in our language’. What do you think has changed? Do the changes help or hinder your interpretation of the story. Read it through more than once. Read it out loud. Read it slowly. Enjoy this little exercise. Perhaps it will help you on your faith journey. I hope so!

The Good Samaritan (revisited)

A faithful church-going man, on his way home from worship, mused on the parable of *The Good Samaritan* that was the set lesson for the day. The preacher had made the usual points about charity and neighbourliness and responsibility and going out of your way to help. Our man had heard it all before, and accepted that it applied to him, but he wondered where the Samaritans of this world might be found, and whether he could be one of them. He decided to drop in to Woolworths on the way home to pick up some milk and a loaf of bread, and by the doors to plenty he noticed a beggar. The beggar sat cross-legged on the ground and had a rough sign that said “Homeless. I need shelter”.

He stopped to watch. A man came by, pulling a heavy suitcase. He tossed some coins into the man’s hat and said, “Sorry mate, I’m a missionary on my way to India. I have a bagful of Bibles and Tracts, and if I don’t hurry I’ll miss my plane.

The man continued to watch. Along came an evangelist, fresh from a prayer meeting and on his way to yet another encounter with The Spirit. “God bless you”, he muttered, as he swept by, and he offered some additional advice in passing that involved getting your act together, and Jesus loves you, and faith will move mountains and God will make you rich — if you ask him to....properly.

Our man felt helpless. “Am I called to be a Samaritan?”, he wondered. Am I to be the hero of this story? Will my actions, should I choose to act at all, make any difference? Does the fate of this man, indeed the fate of all those like him, have anything to do with me. Should I take this man to a shelter, or even to my home? Should I treat him to a good feed? And what, he wondered, would he achieved by that? What if begging is a job, like other jobs, Didn’t Jesus say that we would never be without the poor? Hasn’t the world always been divided between the haves and the have-nots? Are not our actions doomed to failure in the face of “the System”. Is this system of ours not perfect, but the best on offer? Is not this system the very embodiment of Christian virtue? What does neighbourliness mean in our welfare state? Can we not leave it to The State to sort out inequities and to relieve pain?

Our man threw some coins into the hat and headed off home to his family and his mortgage and his car payments and his taxes — more puzzled than ever and more overwhelmed. Leave it to the Salvos, he thought.

Prayers – prepared by Ron Townsend

Let us pray

God of all justice,
we pray for your world, your creation, your people;
 for your beaten and broken people;
 for those stripped of dignity and left to die.
You want us to love our neighbours:
when we abandon those who need our aid,
move us to pity and teach us to care.

God in your mercy
Hear our prayer

God of all truth,
we pray for your church, your ministers, your people;
 for those who have been wounded by the church;
 for those the church ignores or excludes.
You want us to love our neighbours:
when we close our eyes to those who are hurt,
move us to pity and help us to care.

God in your mercy
Hear our prayer

God of all love,
we pray for this community, our families, our friends;
 for those who suffer violence, neglect or abuse;
 for those who are unable to care for themselves.
You want us to love our neighbours:
when we walk away from our responsibilities,
move us to pity and teach us to care.

God in your mercy
Hear our prayer

God of all compassion,
we pray for all who suffer, those in trouble or grief;
 for those who are alone, without family or friends:
 for those whose bodies hurt, for the sick and those close to death.
You want us to love our neighbours:
when our hearts are untouched by the pain of others,
move us to pity and teach us to care.

God in your mercy
Hear our prayer

God of all hope,
we remember those who have died in your love;
 those who have died uncared for and alone;
 those whom we have loved who rest in your presence.
You want us to love you with heart and soul and mind and strength;
when we forget you, when we forget our neighbours,
teach us again your way of love,
that we may dwell in your presence and come into our inheritance of eternal life

God in your mercy
Hear our prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come;
your will be done on earth as in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil,
for the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and forever.
Amen

Blessing

May you have enough happiness to keep you sweet,
enough trials to keep you strong,
enough sorrow to keep you human,
enough hope to keep you happy,
enough failure to keep you humble,
enough success to keep you eager,
enough friends to give you comfort,
enough faith and courage in yourself to banish sadness,
enough wealth to meet your needs and one thing more;
enough determination to make each day a more wonderful day than the one before.

Amen

Thoughts for the week to come

Saved and Born Again, Now What?

It started innocently enough, or so I thought.
Doing the things, a good Christian ought.
Trying to be the best Christian God has ever seen.
Religious to a fault, you know what I mean.
Proudly pious all the time and in every way.
Strutting my spiritual stuff every day.

Searching for ways to show my devotion;
Doing everything I could to earn God's promotion.
Working hard at religion to reach the next spiritual level—
Seminary, Bible reading, prayer, praise, and Holy revel.
Thinking I could get more, God, of Your attention,
By being the best Christian that You could ever mention.

Living the Christian life on my terms.
Got my fire insurance; I'm not gonna burn.
Declaring, "God, I want to be 'souled' out to you!"
Broken, spilled out, desiring to stick like glue;
Serving without ceasing, ever ready to answer Your Call;
To be the best Christian that You have ever seen and always on the ball.

Then, in a moment of passionate, fervent prayer;
When I felt I hadn't done enough, and it seemed You didn't care;
All my efforts to please You looked worthless and of no avail.
And my worst fears were realized; I had failed.
I cried out mournfully, "Oh God, I give up; do what You must
To make me the best Christian ever; for it is in You that I put my trust!"

Althea DeBrule

Postlude

You can find a copy of today's sermon along with other congregational information on the church website.

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Rev. Karel Reus
Music: Peter Hurley

Church Office
Tuesdays, 9.30am-12.30pm
Fridays, 9.30am-3.30pm
Phone: 0411 958 127
office@ormond.unitingchurch.org.au

Website: www.ormondunitingchurch.org

NEWS AND NOTICES