

Barthol Chapel and Tarves Sunday 27 September 2020

Worship Materials



Praise CH4 185 Come children join and sing

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| <p>1. Come children, join and sing
 <i>Alleluia! Amen!</i>
 Loud praise to Christ our King;
 <i>Alleluia! Amen!</i>
 Let all, with heart and voice
 Before his throne rejoice
 Praise is his gracious choice
 <i>Alleluia! Amen!</i></p> | <p>On him we can depend
 His love shall never end
 <i>Alleluia! Amen!</i></p> |
| <p>2. Come lift your hearts on high
 <i>Alleluia! Amen!</i>
 Let praises fill the sky;
 <i>Alleluia! Amen!</i>
 He is our guide and friend</p> | <p>3. Sing praises loud and long
 <i>Alleluia! Amen!</i>
 Life shall not end the song
 <i>Alleluia! Amen!</i>
 On heaven's blissful shore
 His goodness we'll adore
 Singing for evermore
 <i>Alleluia! Amen!</i></p> |

The Word of God: St Matthew 21:28-32

28 'What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, "Son, go and work in the vineyard today." 29 He answered, "I will not"; but later he changed his mind and went. 30 The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, "I go, sir"; but he did not go. 31 Which of the two did the will of his father?' They said, 'The first.' Jesus said to them, 'Truly I tell you, the tax-collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. 32 For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax-collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.'

Tarves Parish Church of Scotland. Registered Charity: SC 017161

CCLI: 2417487, 2417504, 241749

Barthol Chapel Parish Church of Scotland. Registered Charity: SC 010960

Reflection

I wonder how you are feeling about wearing masks – or to be more accurate the face-coverings that we are required to wear to protect one another. My biggest problem is that I'm inclined to have my mind on other things and wander into the shop without putting it on....if any of you see me doing this please stop me! None of us find these face-coverings comfortable. Indeed some people find wearing masks very difficult because they struggle to breathe behind them. The masks are suffocating and constraining. The very things designed to protect are the things that constrain and inhibit.

And that is not only true of the masks that we are carrying around with us in our pockets at the moment. It is true of the metaphorical masks that we all wear. You know what I mean. There is "the brave face" mask – when we pretend that all is well when deep down we are sad or afraid. There is the keep calm, trust me – I know what I'm doing" mask – when we haven't a clue and are paddling like mad below the waves just to keep our heads above the water. There is the "I'm the boss – you will do as I say" mask, when we feel insecure or if our authority is being questioned. There is the mask of Churchianity– when we get passionately involved in the outward trappings of religion yet deep down we are struggling with doubts and questions about God and Jesus and all that faith demands.

So many different masks. And I'm sure you could go on and list many more masks that you have used during your life. But the problem with these masks is, that while we may think they are a protection, and sadly sometimes they are necessary for survival in today's world, they can get to the point where they stifle us. Our true selves become so deeply hidden that it is hard to see beyond the masks. We become reliant upon them. Yet they are inhibiting our freedom and our growth. In our services this month we have been looking at the parables which Jesus told and these stories might be seen as one way in which Jesus challenges the masks we have chosen to wear.

This is particularly true when we come to the parable we heard earlier of the two sons. Their Father owns a vineyard. One morning the Father approaches each of his sons to ask them if they will go and help out in the vineyard. "No fear" says the first, outwardly rebellious. "No problem" says the second outwardly dutiful. But of course that is not the whole story. For the first son, the one who initially rebels and refuses to do his Father's bidding has a change of heart. Or perhaps he always meant to go but could not be seen to be too eager to do his Father's bidding. Eventually he wanders off, to put in a day's labour at the vineyard. Sadly the second son, the one who seemed so willing, never reaches the vineyard. Perhaps something else cropped up or he just lost sight of what he was meant to be doing or perhaps he had no intentions of going in the first place. He just says what he thinks his Father wants to hear.

Jesus finished his story with a question for the religious leaders "Which of the two sons did what his Father wanted?"

According to Matthew Jesus told that parable of the two sons in the Temple during the last week of his life. Jesus has already driven the traders and the moneychangers out of their customary places in the Temple Courtyard. Now the religious leaders are challenging him to produce his credentials – on whose authority does Jesus speak and act? The religious leaders are big on the outward trappings of authority. They wear their religious masks with all seriousness as they police the Temple courts. But Jesus, as he so frequently does,

turns the question back on them – the question is not simply one of religious authority. It is also one of discernment and obedience to the will of God.

And, Jesus carries on, it is the prostitutes and the tax-collectors who are showing discernment and obedience. They are the ones who are really listening. They are the ones who flocked to hear John the Baptist and Jesus himself. It is the prostitutes and tax-collectors, who are prepared to take off their masks, to open themselves up to new possibilities. They are the ones who are turning back to God and finding new life and hope. And as a result it is they who are leading the way towards God's Kingdom. And they are leaving the religious leaders with their narrow and rigid systems trailing far behind in their wake.

But of course as always with Jesus parables we are left with questions. It is clear that neither son in Jesus story is the ideal child. Both brought pain to their Father in their different ways. Just as God weeps over the stubbornness of the religious leaders who hide behind the trappings of religion and refuse to turn to him, so too God weeps over the promiscuity of the prostitutes and the greed of the tax-collectors, whose lives are in such a mess and a muddle. For God sees behind the masks and loves them all.

How do we know this? We know this because of Jesus himself. Jesus is the third Son in this bible passage – he is the ideal child – the one who does the Father's will – whose life reveals an integrity of word and action. There are no masks on the cross – only sorrow and pain and grief for a lost world.

And here we come to the heart of the matter. Because this story is not simply about two sons being asked to tend a vineyard. It is not just about Pharisees and Sadducees, prostitutes and tax collectors. It is about you and me. It is about the Church. It is about how we listen to God – or don't; how we respond to God's love – or don't; how we live and grow as a community of faith – or don't. 2000 years after they were first told Jesus stories continue to challenge us. They find their way behind all the masks we choose to wear and touch our hearts.

And one final thought. At present we may be required to wear face-coverings when we meet other people indoors. But of course these alone cannot protect us from the virus. It will find its way beyond them. The same goes for the metaphorical masks we choose to wear. There is no mask that can shield us from the penetrating love of God. Because God already knows what lies behind our masks and loves us still. Why don't you take off whatever metaphorical mask you are wearing today and discover the love and grace of God and the freedom that is God's purpose for all humanity?

Pointers for Prayer

- Those suffering from or bereaved by the corona virus
- Those who have lost a loved one for other reasons during the pandemic
- All key workers, those adjusting to working from home and those who are returning to their workplace
- The governments in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland and their advisers as the virus threatens to peak again
- University students and staff
- Businesses struggling and all who are facing redundancy and financial hardship
- Family, friends and neighbours, those most affected by the restrictions

- Local congregations as they take difficult decisions on whether to re-open for worship and how best to implement health and safety measures
- The Church of Scotland General Assembly meeting on-line on Friday and Saturday, its Moderator, Clerk and Commissioners.

Praise CH4 458 At the name of Jesus

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| <p>1. At the name of Jesus
Every knee shall bow
Every tongue confess him
King of glory now;
'Tis the Father's pleasure
We should call him Lord
Who from the beginning
Was the mighty Word.</p> | <p>3. In your hearts enthrone him
There let him subdue
All that is not holy,
All that is not true:
Let his grace support you
In temptations's hour
And his will enfold you
In its light and power.</p> |
| <p>2. Brothers, sisters name him
With love strong as death
But with awe and wonder
And with bated breath!
He is God the Saviour
He is Christ the Lord
Ever to be worshipped,
Trusted and adored.</p> | <p>4. In his Father's glory
Christ shall come again
Angel hosts proclaiming
His return to reign.
For all wreaths of empire
Meet upon his brow
And our hearts confess him
King of glory now.</p> |

Notices

Next Sunday 9.45am Joint Worship for Harvest (Service commences 10.00am)

This will have a rainbow theme – please choose a colour of the rainbow to wear or bring something of that colour into your worship space.

If you would like to be added to the e-mail list for the link to Sunday's live worship gathering on zoom or join in on your landline please contact:

Rob e-mail sessionclerk@bartholchapel.org or Susanna Tel 851345 or e-mail smbichard@aol.com.

Tuesday 29 September 7.00pm Meeting of Barthol Chapel Trustees, Board and Session on Zoom – link to follow.

Community Bible Experience – Books and reading plans are available and can be collected from the Manse vestibule. £5 towards the cost of these may be left in the envelope provided. First meeting Thursday 1 October 4.00pm when we will be discussing Jonah, Amos, Hosea and Micah. Anyone interested please contact Alison for the link 851295.

Care in the Community if you are aware of anyone in Tarves who needs help of any kind please contact Ruth 851887. If you are aware of anyone in Barthol Chapel please contact James Hepburn 806611.

Pastoral Care If you would like to speak to the minister please contact Alison 851295.

Sunday 4 October 'Harvest at Home'

How can we celebrate '**H-A-R-V-E-S-T**' this year? Here are some suggestions

- **H-A-V-E** a meal using local produce only
- Open your **H-E-A-R-T-S** by making contact with someone on their own
- **S-H-A-R-E** with others by making a donation of food or money - instead of taking produce to church use the local collection points at Duthie's and the Pharmacy. Or give to a charity like Mary's Meals whose vision is that every child receives one daily meal in their place of education and that all those who have more than they need, share with those who lack even the most basic things. Donate by Tel:01838 200605 or 0800 698 1212 Or online www.marysmeals.org.uk

And of course **GIVE THANKS**- join our on-line Harvest Thanksgiving at 10.00am on Zoom (link available from Susanna 851345). This will have a rainbow theme – please wear or bring with you an object representing one colour of the rainbow.

