



28 May 2017
Easter 7

Welcoming the Stranger – Welcoming the Christ
“Thinking allowed; thinking aloud allowed”

Minister: Robyn McPhail
Musicians: Kato Akau’ola KK Clyde Foster Kaeo
Readers: Diane Paterson KK tba Kaeo

Plugging in

Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads.
Henry David Thoreau

Gathering with all the Saints

[KK] Singers *Sing a new song*

Hymn *Beneath the Southern Cross*

Prayer

Giver of power and strength,
you take a rag-tag bunch
of denying disciples and
feckless followers,
creating a new community
of servants who seek
to do your will.

Keeper of all time,
you are enthroned on the
rubble of death's shattered power,
calling us to your side
and giving us a new vocation,
by which we serve the

broken of the communities
in which we live.

Constant Presence of hope,
you strengthen us so
we never give in while
confronted by evil;
you continually pray for us
that we never quit when
faith proves to be more
of a challenge than we imagined.

God in Community, Holy in One,
we lift our hearts to you,

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O Lord, hear my prayer

Symbol of God's Presence

Song [KK] [Halle, halle, halle](#) [Diane's choice]

[KAEO] *At the name of Jesus* WOV170ii [Clyde's choice]

Clarifying our Purpose

Conversation with the Word

John 17:1-11

This reading is just so “new age” in the way it sounds. Can’t Jesus speak plainly? It’s as confounding as old school minister’s prayers that went on and on and you lost track of what they were saying. (Pious words we used to call them.)

A point has been made that Jesus would in fact want those listening in to his prayer to be a bit confused. If they thought that they knew exactly the rules for kingdom living in the future and all they needed to do was follow them, then what was really needed was to realise that it was very much deeper. They needed to be able to tap into – and not have to understand fully – mystery. The risk is of thinking that it’s a matter of just

doing what Jesus was doing, simply follow the set pattern. In effect, turn his life-coaching into a code of behaviour to conform to.

No, he wanted them (and us) out of our depth the moment we start thinking the Christ-shape is a defined curriculum, with tick boxes to pass or fail on.

Andrew Prior writes:

His hope, and indeed his expectation, is that the swirling repetitions and the lack of logical sequence— how does this connect to that!? — in the text, will allow something of the deeper mystery of God which he has experienced to also break through into our consciousness. He wants to say there is something life-giving in this humiliated, dying, absent Messiah which is even deeper than we imagined!

It's not simple, yet it is.

Now something we really must appreciate is John's meaning when he speaks of "the evil of the world". I guess we pull back from talking this way – about evil, and about sin. So put aside previous thoughts, some of which see evil in terms we might think primitive. Think of it in terms of "a system of human governance that move[s] contrary to the values of God and [the] Kingdom"(Samuel Cruz). That's evil, that's sin.

Remember John 3:19:

And this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil...

And a few verses after today's reading:

I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. (John 17:14-16)

Jesus is praying that his disciples be protected from this, from the pervasiveness of the contrary value system. Be free of its grip, free to be a follower of the Way.

Jesus died because he defied the dominant system of the powers-that-be, which was (and is) a domination system. He himself would not use dominance tactics in response, overpowering power by having power over. He stuck with God's way – love, seeking always justice, well-being, deep peace.

And, by the way, what is named "sin" is not so much doing things that break the system's code of behaviour as being entangled in this system held together by "power over". It is something that happens to us as much as (or can be more than) something we do. We are trapped in the ways of the world feeling and thinking there is no alternative.

Andrew Prior again with a practical example:

To put the nature of the world's sin and evil— our evil— in perspective, and to reevaluate the endemic nature of sin, and our inability to escape it, we might look at the phenomenon of slavery. Slavery is the direct opposite of Jesus' command in John: love one another as I have loved you. Slavery is officially banned worldwide, yet it is endemic.

Contemporary slavery takes many forms, from women forced into prostitution, to child slavery in agriculture supply chains or whole families working for nothing to pay off generational debts. Slavery thrives on every continent and in almost every country. Forced labour, people trafficking, debt bondage and child marriage are all forms of modern-day slavery that affect the world's most vulnerable people.

Think of our New Zealand situation: where have we got slavery? (Because we have.) Where do you see debt bondage and how are people trapped?

Where did the budget get us?

...

Andrew Prior writes:

Where do we find life in the midst of an evil world? Only near the cross, the implement used to intimidate the population of Jesus' time into accepting its slavery. This is the mystery which John claims to have perceived. Near the cross, in danger of the cross, we find life.

Social and political action are good, but there's something personal being put to us here. Give up allegiance to the way things are, the ways of the dominant system. Recognise the status quo as a structure of power and

not life-giving. See through the world, in the writer of John's terms, and leave it. Live in the kingdom-way, as if it were fully *on earth as in heaven* already.

It is not simple, yet it is.

"Near the cross" for me means life in relationship – with our surrounds, with other human beings, with God. Staying realising our inter-relationship no matter what is going on, how hard, how painful, how ugly. That's our basis for living the kingdom-way. Always in relationship, in some way.

The domination system relies on us seeing ourselves not essentially in relationship, but as units. Separate, needy units, under threat if we can't secure our position, at risk of being nobody if we don't take charge of ourselves.

Staying well connected is the best protection from that false view of being human. Not trapped, not slaves, but free. Eternal life, John calls it. Already living in God's age to come (as I've said this is a better translation for the Greek than "eternal life"), John's expression for what the other gospels call the kingdom. Another word is "glory", when the relationship awareness is so strong and it's like a glowing, a warmth, a light within and going out from us.

"Love one another as I have loved you". Compare that to the commandment of the domination system around us, "take charge!" Even enlightened self-interest, which might sound okay, is still self at the centre. Self at risk therefore of being self alone.

Conversations around the Table

Music to listen to [Welcome Holy Spirit](#)

Continuing the Conversation

The World: Our Prayers

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle: Angola, Mozambique

Prayer of an African Christian

God,
enlarge my heart
that it may be big enough
to receive the greatness of your love.
Stretch my heart
that it may take into it
all those around the world
who, with me, believe in Jesus Christ.
Stretch it
that it may take into it
all those who are not lovely in my eyes,
and whose hands I do not want to touch;
through Jesus Christ, my saviour.

Lord's Prayer

Heavenly One, our Parent God, holy is Your name.
Let Your Reign come, and Your will be done
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today the food we need.
Forgive us our wrongdoings
as we forgive those who have wronged us.
Bring us through the hard-testing times
and deliver us from Evil's ways.
For all power, dominion and glory are Yours
now and forever. AMEN.

Translated and adapted by Rev. John Maynard, ©2010

Sent to Love the World as God Loves

Serving in the Week Ahead

Offering Hymn *You are called to tell the story* tune: Regent Square WOV84

Dedication

Loving God, you pour out your grace upon us without reservation; help us to be as gracious and generous with our gifts and resources, so others might know your hope, your healing, your presence in their lives. This we ask in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Blessing

May the God who shakes heaven and earth
whom death could not contain
who lives to disturb and heal us,
bless you with power to go forth
and proclaim the gospel

Janet Morley

... Kia tau/The grace ... Amen

Robyn McPhail, 28.05.2017

NOTICES FOR TODAY – 28 MAY 2017

Parish email: admin@kkup.org.nz

Church Office at Cornerstone: 09 407 8250

Minister: Robyn McPhail (DD) 09 283 4802, 021 0247 6280
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Notices: Jenny Phillips 09 407 8883 jenny.jane@xtra.co.nz

KK Pastoral: Jessica Scott 09 407 5555 jomscott2@gmail.com

ROSTERED FOR NEXT SUNDAY 4 JUNE 2017

Organists: Diane Paterson KK Clyde Foster Kaeo

Readers: Neil Scott KK tba Kaeo

Door and tea: Elaine and Ian

Flowers: Jenny/Karen

LECTIONARY READINGS FOR THE COMING WEEK:

Acts 2:1-21 or Numbers 11:24-30 Psalm 104:24-34, 35b

1 Corinthians 12:3b-13 or Acts 2:1-21 John 20:19-23 or John 7:37-39

DURING CHURCH AT KERIKERI: please be sure doors to the kitchenette, kitchen, and outside from the foyer are closed, particularly when little ones are present. Also a watchful eye from a chair at the back is helpful.

KERIKERI SINGERS: Practice following service today at 11am

COMMUNION SERVICE: today 28 May at 4pm at Ted Robinson Chapel.

CORNERSTONE MANAGEMENT: Monday 29 May 11am in the Cornerstone Meeting Room.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: Monday 29 May 12 noon in the Cornerstone Meeting Room.

BIBLE STUDY: Monday 29 May 1.15-3pm in the Cornerstone Meeting Room. All welcome to come and check it out.

KERIKERI HOME GROUP: Friday 9 June at Ngaire's. Note this is the second Friday because of Queen's Birthday weekend.

GOD'S KIDS AT CORNERSTONE: Dedicated session for younger ones during church **today** Sunday 28 May, then on 11 and 25 June. Adults welcome (helpers always good value!) Robyn will lead this again on 25 June and will need to be involved regularly if there are not others to take a turn.

IN CORNERSTONE THIS WEEK: Sunday: Ensemble pm Monday: Bible Study pm Tuesday: Yoga am; Tai Chi pm; Learning Hub pm. Wednesday: Stroke Club AGM pm; Tai Chi pm; Learning Hub pm. Thursday: Women's Fellowship am; Girls' Brigade pm. Friday: Hangi Bro am.

Hosts: Monday – Lorraine, Sue; Tuesday: Jessica, Mary; Wednesday – Bev, Michael; Thursday – Jenny, Clyde, Sue; Friday – Akisi, Margot. *Paparangi and Robyn also present at various times.*

AT KAEO CHURCH HALL THIS WEEK: Monday: Yoga pm. Thursday: Puna Awhina am.

CORNERSTONE ALARM: The building has an alarm system which the person unlocking the building needs to disarm, and do the opposite when locking. If you need to get access and are not comfortable with

this process, there is always another way of doing things – another person or phoning Robyn to get it disarmed, or armed, remotely. Please don't hesitate to ask for help.

CAR BOOT SALES: Next sale is Saturday 10 June 7am - 12noon at Cornerstone. Contact Mary 407 1117 re assisting etc.