



St Columba's Parish Church
Stewarton (SC013595) (CCLI 1095831)
Sunday 19th November 2023 Home Service

Prayer

Heavenly Father, you sent your Son Jesus Christ to be the light of the world.

Be with us in our worship this day, and grant that we may hear your voice and learn from you, that we may be strengthened in our faith and bring praise and glory to your name - we ask it through Jesus Christ - Amen.

Hymn CH4 36 God is our refuge and our strength

Reading Matthew 25: 14 – 30

The lectionary reading for today is the parable of the talents. A story that again we know well.

Someone writing on the parables says the best-known parable is the Prodigal Son, the most touching parable is the widow's mite but the parable with the most apt application for us is the parable of the talents.

Jesus is using yet one more parable to explain future events. Once there was a man who was about to go on a journey.

The man going on a "journey" is Jesus.

In the story the man who is about to leave on a journey entrusts his servants with different portions of his wealth or property.

They are to look after that property, and to ensure that it continues to work for the master, that it continues to make a profit while he is away.

Two of the servants double the investment they are entrusted with, and are richly rewarded for doing so and given even more responsibility; but the third gains nothing from it for his master, all he does is keep what he was given to watch over safely - and so what he was entrusted with is taken from him and he is cast off the estate of his master

and into the place where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

It is a straightforward account, but what as Christians are we to make of it, what lesson does it have for us?

I want to suggest to you that while it is true that God wants us to use his gifts and to multiply them for the benefit of his Kingdom, that we are not judged according to the quantity of the work we do for God, nor even by the quality of that work, rather we are judged by our attitude, by our willingness to do as God wants us to do.

God, like the master in today's parable believes in us. He trusts us to do well with his love, to develop the gifts he gives us so that all the peoples of his kingdom may benefit from them.

If we use the gifts of God for the glory of God, God will be pleased with us, and we will begin to transform this world into his kingdom here on earth.

Bernard Shaw shortly before he died was asked by a reporter "Mr. Shaw," "if you could live your life over and be anybody you've known or any person from history, who would you be?" "I would choose," replied Shaw "to be the man George Bernard Shaw could have been, but never was."

What a sad epitaph that would be. 'He never was the person that he could have been.'

When all is said and done, Christ's parable is a positive one. Two out of the three servants heard those words, well done good and faithful servant. To all who are doing their best to live good lives, who are willing to do what they can for the kingdom of God, God speaks those self-same words – well done good and faithful servant. It is up to each of us to ask if they are being said to us.

Prayer

Lord God, we thank you for all that you have given us. For the changing beauty of the world, the colours of autumn, the wonder of sea and sky of hill and valley.

We thank you for the talents that you have given to us, and we pray that guided by you we may use them wisely.

We confess, O Lord, that we have not always used them in a faithful and responsible manner. Forgive us when are all too easily satisfied with what we have and fail to share with

those who are in need. Forgive us for when we have buried the talents and failed to use all the things you give us. Have mercy upon us, cleanse us and help us, O Lord.

We pray, O God, for the church here and throughout the world that it may encourage all its members to discover, develop, and use all their gifts.

We pray for the world which you love, and for which Christ gave his life. Let there be an end to wars and terror and exploitations. Especially we pray that peace may come in Ukraine and Russia in Gaza and Israel and all the other troubled spots throughout the world.

Guide the leaders of the nations and all who strive for peace and justice.

We pray for those nearer home. Help us to care for our neighbours and to cherish the life of your creation, that your will may be done on earth.

We pray for our nation. Bless the King and the Royal Family. Direct the Government, members of Parliament, and all who in various ways serve the community.

Grant that none in our land may be despised or rejected, and that your kingdom of love may prevail. We pray for those in need, for ill or distressed people, and for those who draw near to death. In the name of him who bears our griefs and carries our sorrows, bring them your comfort and peace. We give you thanks for all who have departed this life in faith. Keep us with them in communion with Christ our risen Lord and bring us at the last with all your saints to be in the glory of your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ, to whom with you, Father, and the Holy Spirit, be praise and honour for ever.

Hymn CH4 500 Lord of Creation

Blessing May the Blessing of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit be with you and all those whom you love this day and always Amen.

Intimations

Bible Study/Prayer Group meets on Monday at 1.30pm in The Church Hall.

The Guild will meet on Tuesday 21st November at 2pm when Rev Dr Grant Barclay will give a talk to the Guild on his role as Chaplain to the King. All welcome

EACHa Christmas Toy Collection will take place on Sunday 10th December. Please remember age range is from babies to young teens.

Ceilidh The fellowship Team is holding a family Ceilidh in the Church Hall on Saturday 25th November 7pm-9.30pm. Tickets are £10 for Adults including supper, primary aged children are FOC and will be given juice and crisps. Tickets will be available on Sunday from the Fellowship Team.

Pastoral Care There will be a Service in Lochhead Court on Sunday 26th November at 2pm.

Earl Haig collection raised £535.44 including Gift Aid. Thanks to all who contributed.

Shoebox Appeal - Liz Aitken would like to thank everyone who donated to this appeal. We collected 44 filled boxes and donations of £50.

CONTACT NAMES:

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Please send notices to the above email address no later than 6 pm on Monday. Thank you.