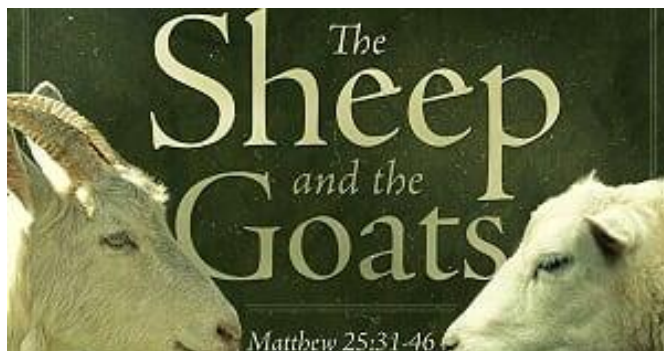


# **Ardoch Parish Church**

## **Sunday 22nd November 2020**

We warmly welcome Gordon Roy who is conducting the Service today whilst Mairi is on holiday.



It's the last Sunday of the church year; we begin Advent next Sunday and it will feel like a fresh start I am sure as the building will be open to gather for worship. We finish the year as Jesus finishes his public ministry in Matthew 25. We'll hear Sue Crorie read it for us but also a version from YouTube where Keith Green puts it to music.

We begin this week with a Psalm again. It's Psalm 100 and a fantastic unaccompanied version led by Keith Getty who writes songs such as In Christ Alone and often with Stuart Townend who you'll also see on the clip.

As you'll hear in Matthew 25, Christ the glorified King will shout "depart" or "go from my sight" to a group of people – the goats. We need to establish right at the start of our service that we are currently in that period of grace when the risen Christ is saying "come." This Psalm is an invite to come. Come ye behold him and rejoice! That's reason enough for it to be paired up with Matthew 25 in the lectionary. So turn the volume up, maybe even stand up as I'll ask the congregation to do in Blackford and you can even

sing at home as we take up the invitation "All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice; Psalm 100."

All people that on earth do dwell,  
sing to the LORD with cheerful voice.  
Him serve with mirth, his praise forth tell,  
come ye before him and rejoice!

Know that the LORD is God indeed;  
Without our aid he did us make.  
We are the flock he doth us feed,  
And for his sheep he doth us take.

O enter then his gates with praise,  
Approach with joy his courts unto  
Praise, laud and bless his name always  
For it is seemly so to do.

Because the LORD our God is good,  
his mercy is forever sure.  
His truth at all times firmly stood  
and shall from age to age endure.

Praise God from whom all blessing flow.  
Praise him all creatures here below  
Praise him above ye heavenly hosts  
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen

Words: William Kethe  
© Public Domain

## **Prayer**

Lord today we worship you with gladness and in the comfort of our own homes come into his presence with singing. We know Lord that you are God, and that you God should be Lord. May we know that in our heads, in our hearts, our souls, our minds and our strength. May we know it in our hands, in our mouths and in our feet. That with our whole bodies we worship you and serve you. It is you who made us; we are your creation; your people, and the sheep of your pasture. We give thanks for your

goodness, your steadfast love which endures for ever, your faithfulness to all generations. Let us give thanks for all the good things you gave us this week.

You, God, are our one and only King.

We beg Your forgiveness for the other “kings” that we kneel before: Money, power, gossip, self-righteousness, privilege...

We beg Your forgiveness, we who are broken and torn apart by our own doings and un-doings.

We pray for those most needing good things from you. The hungry, the homeless, those in hospital or prison. Those who Sue read about and who you called us to meet the needs of. We think of those we see on our tv screens and newspapers who seem so far away, so open our eyes to those who are closer, those who we can speak to, those who we could call, those who – if it were you, we’d be right over there.

Father as we prepare to gather in the church building next Sunday, we pray for those who are getting it ready. We pray for Mairi in this time of holiday, refresh her to lead us unto Advent and Christmas. Thank you for Christine who is putting out services online and in print each week. Bless her for her service of you.

So we pray together – yet apart - in the words Christ taught us, saying

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

*Before Sue reads we listen to a version of the Sheep and the Goats set to music and played and sung by Keith Getty*

## **Sue Crorie reads from**

### **Matthew Chapter 25: 31-46**

#### **Sue introduces the next hymn which is**

*"There is a Redeemer"*

There is a Redeemer,  
Jesus, God's own Son,  
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah,  
Holy One,

Thank you oh my Father,  
For giving us Your Son,  
And leaving Your Spirit,  
'Til the work on earth is done.

Jesus my Redeemer,  
Name above all names,  
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah,  
Oh, for sinners slain.

When I stand in glory,  
I will see His face,  
And there I'll serve my King forever,  
In that holy place.

Words & Music: Melody Green

© 1982 Universal Music - Brentwood Benson Publishing  
(Admin. by Brentwood-Benson Music Publishing, Inc.)  
Birdwing Music (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing)  
Ears To Hear (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing)

## **Sermon**

Today is called Christ the King Sunday. We're not that big on feast days in the Church of Scotland but we share the same lectionary with the Lutheran Church, the Catholic

Church and others. I was covering for Mairi this Sunday last year and we looked at the trial of Jesus where Herod mocked Jesus as King of the Jews.

This year although Jesus is actually speaking 2 days before he speaks with Herod, he is speaking about a day yet to come. It's quite a passage as the culmination of Jesus' teaching and the culmination of Matthew chapter 25. Let's remind ourselves of the context. Having said in the previous chapter that his return will be like a thief in the night and we should all taking steps to be ready, the parable of the 10 bridesmaids teaches that those who have not made preparations will miss out; the time of invitation will come to an end and the door will be closed. The parable of the bags of gold teaches that the time of waiting should be spent working. Although we worked out the maths of the parable, we noted that in dying for us to take the penalty of sin Christ gives us so much that his gifts can be weighed out rather than counted out. We used to redeem vouchers in shops now we redeem loyalty card points but the Redeemer of Melody Green's song is "Jesus, God's own Son" who paid a price to set me free and to set you free. In doing so he then gives all the good things we have to enjoy and steward in his service; our health and strength, financial resources and the gifts and talents that we can use to serve him and others.

And it's the theme of serving Christ and serving others that is the message of this section; does Jesus mean enough to us that we use the time of waiting and working to serve those who Christ identifies with as those in need.

Notice this section does not start like the other two sections of chapter 25. No "it will be like." This is not even called a parable in the NIV. Just "The sheep and the goats" When the son of man comes in his glory; no messing about; this is going to happen be sure of it. The Son of man – Jesus

himself; he's used the title for himself in the third person regularly and several times in chapter 24 but it's worth taking in verses 1&2 of chapter 26.

When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, 2 "As you know, the Passover is two days away—and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified

So that confirms we're talking about Jesus and when he's talking- the Wednesday of Holy Week as everyone else would celebrate the Passover on Friday while he was hanging on the cross.

There are four names or titles for Jesus in this passage – you'll have to reread it if you missed them, but Jesus who arrived humbly as a baby will return gloriously as king to sit on the throne – and Advent is about preparing for both of these. So where is he now? Is he not already seated on the throne? Yes; but a different throne, Hebrews 4v16.

<sup>16</sup> Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Yes, this is still the time of or grace, of mercy, of opportunity to repent and be accepted into God's family.

So when that time comes to an end – "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him," what will happen? At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess him king of glory now. But for many it will be too late.

And is the only difference between the sheep and the goats what they did and didn't do? Well no not really. It's their unobservable relationship with God that motivates the activity or inactivity.

Jesus did not say all this to leave us in doubt or wondering.

His invitation is clear. His offer is open to take him as Saviour and Lord; he wants you at his wedding because you mean so much to him – no limit of 20 that day. Don't wonder if you'll make the grade...we won't but Christ does, and we go in as his guests to the wedding as his faithful servants and as his followers.

If Christ means enough to us we'll want to be there. If we know what it is to have sins forgiven, to be given a purpose and mission in life, to have a confidence in him as Lord of our lives, that God's got this and I owe him everything because of how much he has given me when he redeemed me, then I'll do the good works prepared for me to do. We read about this four weeks ago. Turn with me now to 2 Timothy chapter 3. Verse 17 says "so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." So we've been talking about servants and good works long before we got to Matthew 25. But Ephesians 3 sets out the chronology and the context. Verse 15 says:

and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Salvation – being saved from the eternal punishment of Matthew 25 comes through faith in Jesus Christ. The wise put their trust in Jesus as saviour and Lord and the evidence of that is what the Son of man sees when he sits and judges.

The call to action here on earth is a call to live out the logical consistency of the Christian faith. So many who do not follow Christ do a remarkable job of feeding, clothing, visiting and caring for the weakest members of our broken world. As Nicola Sturgeon is fond of saying, "let me be very clear about this," non-Christians do a remarkable amount of thankless caring for the weak and the broken. But if your world view is that there is no creator, no personal God,

therefore no absolute right and wrong, no more purpose than a collection of chemicals that gathered in a particular way, that survival of the fittest and a long term development that leaves behind the genetically poorly equipped of each species then why do you care? As Christians we believe that God created people and Christ died for them; it is only logically consistent that we respond to that by valuing what God values. Our faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord must influence our lives that the Son of Man has all the evidence he needs by looking at our lives.

Last week we noted that prospect of Christ saying, "well done Good and faithful servant." This week we return to the first parable to get a summary all the more condemning than the suggestion that there are those who do not actually know Jesus. In verse 12 the bridegroom – Jesus – says 'Truly I tell you; I don't know you.'

I know you walked around with the flock, but I never knew you.

I know you looked like a sheep, but I didn't know you and you didn't know me.

You didn't actually want me as part of your life up to now, so the offer is now closed and you have, eternally, what you wanted – life without me.

Hard words for the last sermon Jesus taught. Hard words to preach today, but if we don't take seriously these three ways Jesus warns us we have missed the point that the Good News is only good news because there is also bad news.

So take up the good news; there's no need to doubt or wonder if you're a sheep or a goat. If you know you're not ready for Christ's return, turn to him now, and trust him to be your Saviour and Lord. If you are doubting then take the lesson of 2 Timothy 3 and find God's promises in the God



breathed and useful word of God to make you wise to salvation through faith in Jesus. He can be trusted and your call for salvation and security has been heard; Christ is trustworthy and will not let you go.

Amen.

## **Our closing hymn is “At the name of Jesus”**

At the name of Jesus ev'ry knee shall bow,  
ev'ry 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.

Humbled for a season to receive a name  
from the lips of sinners unto whom he came,  
faithfully he bore it spotless to the last,  
brought it back victorious, when from death he passed.

Surely, this Lord Jesus shall return again,  
with his Father's glory, with his angel train;  
for all wreaths of empire meet upon his brow,  
and our hearts confess him King of glory now.

Author: Caroline M. Noel (1870)

## **Benediction**

*By way of benediction we offer the verses with which Paul finished his prayer in chapter 3 of Ephesians:*

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

May God bless you this week.

## **Intimations**

There will be Joint Session Meeting with Blackford on Zoom at 7.00pm this Wednesday, 25th November 2020, followed by our own meeting.

### Change to Private Prayer arrangements

As the days grow shorter and colder, the Kirk Session has decided not to open the Church for private prayer on Wednesdays and Sundays from this week onwards.

### Opening of Church for Sunday Worship

The Kirk Session will, at their meeting on Wednesday, finalise the arrangements for starting Services, on Sunday, 29th November at 12.00 noon. To comply with social distancing, this time enables the minister to be in the church as the congregation arrive. Please check the Church notice board and Website for upto date details.

### An update on Ann's Spiers personal Appeal

As you will have read in previous intimations Ann Spiers has organised a collection for the Salvation Army, in place of our Blythswood Shoebox Appeal, which is no longer being run out of Crieff. Blythswood boxes went abroad to many countries, but because of Covid 19, people are losing jobs and their homes, so Ann suggested we donate locally as well.

She has had a wonderful response and has already delivered 60 plus parcels to the branch of the Salvation Army in Stirling. Ann is happy to carry on taking in gifts such as socks, gloves, scarves etc. just like we put in the boxes...for all ages. toiletries, toys for children, household items, (only new) Please mark on your parcel the age group.

All wrapped gifts should be delivered to Ann's home by Friday 27th November.

Ardoch Parish Church Scottish Charity Number SC000139  
[ardochparishchurch.org](http://ardochparishchurch.org)

CCLI Licences 82326, 709991, 2287040, 1028468  
Streaming Licence

