

Bulletin for Sunday 28 August 2022

Good morning friends.

Let's pause as we prepare to worship... and then praise God as we sing a very simple old Victorian hymn:

Hymn: God who made the earth (R&S 62)

Prayers: Loving God, we thank you for the past week:
for all that we have seen and heard...
for all that we have done... and felt...
for all that we have learnt...
we thank you for the beauty, intricacy,
and wonder of the natural world around us...
and we thank you for friends to live and laugh -
and sometimes also cry with.
We ask your blessing on everything we do,
and on everything we give in your service,
today and every day. Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Readings: Psalm 112 and Luke 14: 1 and 7-14

Reflection: Everyone was watching Jesus closely... It sounds very uncomfortable. Obviously there are times when you expect all eyes to be on you. But Jesus had just been invited to dinner, so why was he being scrutinized? Everyone seemed to be waiting to criticise his behaviour. Definitely uncomfortable! But Jesus didn't get red and embarrassed, or angry and defensive. In fact he didn't seem to be worrying about himself at all, but fully aware of what was happening around him. And characteristically he took some of the heat out of the situation by telling a parable - or, rather, a pair of parables. The first was addressed to all the guests, and it immediately became clear that while they had been watching Jesus, he had also been observing them. Apparently it wasn't unusual, or considered particularly rude, to jostle for place at the table. Your importance was reflected in how close you sat to your host. But Jesus reminded them of some advice

in the book of Proverbs (25: 6-7). Humility may not be the way of the world, but it is the way of God's kingdom.

Jesus then turned to his host to deliver the second parable, this time about inclusion. Rather than the usual social round of meals with the same group of people every time - the ones who could afford to reciprocate, and boost each others prestige by doing so - Jesus suggested widening the circle by inviting those not usually included. Those, in fact, excluded by society at that time, such as the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind. I suspect this might have been an unwelcome new idea! Inclusion is all very well in theory, but at a private dinner party? Really, Jesus?!

Who are the people today who are, or who feel, excluded - even by us?

Hymn: Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord! (R&S 740)

Prayers: God of both greatness and compassion
we pray for your world and for all your people.
Where only the loud, rich and powerful are heard:
may the quiet and powerless find a voice;
may the poor be blessed with what they need;
and may the loud and proud find humility
and learn to listen and to reflect.....
We hold before you our communities,
particularly those who are sick or struggling,
and also those we love and especially care about...
In Jesus 'name we ask all our prayers,
including the unspoken prayers of our hearts. Amen

Hymn: Great God, your love has called us here (R&S 339)

Blessing: May we find a place for everyone in our community;

and may the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with us and with all those we love,
this week, and always. Amen

NO Sunday at Six service on Zoom this Sunday - back next week as usual.

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