

Traditional Home service

Sunday 25th September

OPENING PRAYER

God, who in generous mercy sent the Holy Spirit upon your Church in the burning fire of your love: grant that your people may be fervent in the fellowship of the gospel that, always abiding in you, they may be found steadfast in faith and active in service; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

PRAYER OF PENITENCE

Come, let us return to the Lord and say:

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we have sinned against you, through our own fault, in thought, and word, and deed, and in what we have left undone. We are heartily sorry, and repent of all our sins. For your Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive us all that is past; and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your name. Amen.

PRAISE

Let everything be said and done in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God through Jesus Christ. Sing psalms, hymns and sacred songs:

Let us sing to God with thankful hearts. Open our lips, Lord: and we shall praise your name.

HYMN 1 (Amazing grace)

READINGS - Jeremiah 4.11-12,22-28
1 Timothy 1.12-17
Luke 15.1-10

TALK

CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Spend some time praying for our nation, our community and our families.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

HYMN 2 (The King of love my Shepherd is)

CONCLUSION

Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with you all; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

HYMNS TO USE

1 Amazing grace (how sweet the sound)
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
was blind, but now I see.

2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to
fear,
and grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed!

3 Through many dangers, toils and
snares
I have already come:
'tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.

4 The Lord has promised good to me,
his word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be
as long as life endures.

5 Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
and mortal life shall cease:
I shall possess, within the veil,
a life of joy and peace.

6 The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
the sun forbear to shine;
but God, who called me here below,
will be forever mine.

1 The King of love my Shepherd is,
Whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his
And he is mine for ever.

2 Where streams of living water flow
My ransomed soul he leadeth,
And where the verdant pastures grow
With food celestial feedeth.

3 Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,
But yet in love he sought me,
And on his shoulder gently laid,
And home, rejoicing, brought me.

4 In death's dark vale I fear no ill
With thee, dear Lord, beside me;
Thy rod and staff my comfort still,
Thy cross before to guide me.

5 Thou spread'st a table in my sight;
Thy unction, grace bestoweth:
And O what transport of delight
From thy pure chalice floweth!

6 And so through all the length of days
Thy goodness faileth never;
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise
Within thy house for ever.

Sermon - Louise Morton
1 Timothy 1.12-17 & Luke 15.1-10
What makes God happy?

A couple of weeks ago I started preparing a talk entitled: Have you ever wondered what makes God happy?

Then during that week the Queen died, and it seemed as if as a nation we kind of stood still and honoured her passing.... Absolutely the right thing to do...

Then this week we have all sorts happening! Putin making various threatening pronouncements, our government making moves to help businesses with the cost of living crisis... Plus, what ever we may have going on in our own lives....

We may feel concerned, worried, sad... frightened even..

It is certainly a time to keep the main things the main things !

And actually coming back to this title, I think considering what makes God happy! Is one of them....a secret I think to contented living is to enjoy what he enjoys, to find pleasure in what gives him pleasure...

Evidently according to the BBC ! One of The Queens favourite Christian songs when asked the question, was what she remembered her father singing to her : a hymn by Philip Knox about the parable of the lost sheep, we have copies ! And conveniently ! It is the reading today...we will explore again this perhaps familiar story Jesus told.

So to thinking about what makes God happy... I'm not going to attempt some sort of full on list...I think we would be here a long time .. Because I should think it's really long...

Think about the beautiful crazy diversity of creation... why thousands of kinds of wasp? Over 150,000! Does he especially like them? Do wasps make God happy? They must do ! His creatures give him pleasure, his skies, landscapes, every day as he finished he said that's good ! Psalm 104 is a glorious description of the Lord revelling in, and involved with the world he has made, the writer cries out, may the Lord rejoice in his works, let God enjoy his creation!

His children make him happy, their attempts at faithfulness, showing him love, showing kindness to others, Says in proverbs he really relishes those with integrity!I have often had a sense he's pleased as we worship...

We could say relationship makes him happy, Father Son and Spirit welcoming us in to relationship, joining them at the table...

Today's reading from Luke, In these perhaps very familiar 'lost' parables, Jesus shows us what gets the party going in heaven! As the shepherd comes home calling rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost... Just so, Jesus tells his grumbling listeners, there is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, than the 99 righteous... Couple of times in prophet Ezekiel, the Lord says to Ezekiel to say... As I live says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from their ways and live.

The implication... the pleasure for Him comes in their turning....not him smiting! 😊 good news! What makes God happy? An answer Jesus gave, Those that are turning to Him, the lost being found....

Jesus gives these two examples, of every day kind of happenings to make his point, aligning his own behaviour with Gods as he does so... Wouldn't of improved the humour of those listening!

God as the shepherd, I think is easier to imagine, a 100 sheep indicates someone with wealth...

What about..... God as a woman with a few coins... ten coins each worth about a days wages, so not wealthy by any means...

In both parables a lot of effort is expended finding the lost.. the shepherd goes searching, the woman sweeps and lights a lamp..she is careful in her looking....

Then there is delight in the lost being found, the sheep is placed tenderly on the shepherds shoulders, he's already rejoicing...then he calls his friends and neighbours. Rejoice with me....

The situation is echoed in the next parable the woman calls her friends and neighbours round to rejoice with her too. Jesus is saying to those listening, in the natural, the everyday, we can see the joy in finding...

How much more rejoicing should there be over the more weighty, not a coin or a sheep, but something much more precious, a person ! Jesus says there is joy in the presence of the angels, we can only imagine Gods joy infects the whole of heaven...

Paul in his letter to Timothy: The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

The shepherd who as Adrian said a few weeks back was all in, seeking and saving the lost!

(Picture) this is an all in shepherd.....!

Hebrews 12, writing of Jesus... who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame...

The joy? What he came to do : Jesus came into the world to save sinners!

Paul considers himself (message version) "public sinner number one" a blasphemer, persecutor, and man of violence, who received the mercy, patience and love of Jesus.

Paul as a Pharisee was originally the very sort of person at the beginning of chapter fifteen grumbling about Jesus and his behaviour!

Then as Paul turned around and became an all in, lover and follower of Jesus, what rejoicing would there of been in heaven!

The Pharisees and scribes judging others, seeing them as sinners, were just as much in need of the shepherds finding, of repentance and turning to Jesus...

Another thing we can discern from this, that makes God happy, is when his children rejoice with him.

The call in the parable of the shepherd and the woman,
Rejoice with me !

Following the logic, of the Lord's Prayer: your kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven, if we discover what's going on in heaven, then we'll get the idea of what's supposed to be happening here on earth.

Therefore, if it's party time in heaven over every person turning to God, then it should be something we are happy about too!

Sharing the joy!

Being glad for others.

The Pharisees listening to Jesus, grumbling about his welcome of sinners, had the idea that the closest thing on earth to what went on in heaven was the temple and all that went on there, Jesus is giving them a very different picture, just as he is welcoming sinners on earth, so heaven is rejoicing.

Jesus is about the fathers business, doing what makes He, the Father and the Spirit and indeed all of heaven especially happy!

Picture in the Mick Inkpen book of the shepherd and the sheep having a party..

(Picture)

I love this, if we are his sheep, then we need to be excited about the same things as our shepherd.

If he shows us something that gives Him joy, then we need to get in on the party...

He calls: rejoice with me!

We say Yes!

Over the years I've found great comfort considering myself a sheep! Looking at the song our dear Queen knew, I think she found great comfort in knowing she was a sheep too!

Some years ago on holiday in Pembrokeshire we went to Fled y Brennin, and gave ourselves some time to dwell, I spent quite a while feeling wretched over various stuff...got quite maudlin...

Looking out over a field of sheep, seeing a lamb rubbing itself on a rock, I was comforted by the thought what ever else, I'm his sheep,

(Picture)

Remember when the children were small, being comforted by words from Isaiah about how he leads gently those with young! Just as a shepherd would his ewes and lambs...

Must admit! I've never found much comfort in considering my self a coin!

In the commentary Tom Wright mentions the impact these lost parables would of had on repentant sinners listening, they would know they didn't have to earn God's love or Jesus respect, that he loved coming looking for them, and celebrated finding them.

And Jesus actions on earth, corresponded with God's love in the heavenly realm.

Years back when we had this parable for holiday club attempted to have a time where the children rested, maybe even ! laid down with their eyes closed and imagined the story.

This is a very familiar parable to probably most of us, but let's let it be fresh this morning, are we among the 99, then let's be ready to party with our shepherd!

Are we feeling we've wandered a bit and need finding by the shepherd, imagine being lifted by him to the safety of his shoulders and carried home.

Time of prayer.....

1 Timothy 1v17 To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever.. Amen!