**New Kilpatrick**

**Job 42:1-6, 10-17**

**Podcast**

**31st October 2021**

**Gathering**

Come here with your questions

Be here with your worries and concerns

Share here your living and all it brings

Come here with us all in all our doubts

Be here as we all are, confused and uncertain

Share here the honesty of our living today

Come here and wait at the table

Be here and invite the bread and wine

Share here the gifts of God and the story of love

It is a table to open and share

And set free in the world

Unbound and unfenced from human rules and requirements

Come here and be God’s children

Be here and be welcomed in love’s name

Share here the grace that does not let us go

**Welcome**

Hello. I’m Roddy Hamilton, the minister of New Kilpatrick Parish and thank you for letting us journey with you today. We journey to the table of bread and wine and so please find for yourself some bread or oat cakes or shortbread, all of which have been used in our tradition, and some wine or juice of any kind. Our tradition sees truth in symbols, and so any bread or wine, or cracker or juice invites us to meet Jesus in the everyday.

In all our questions of not being good enough, or worry about the future, or concern over pandemics and the truth that is being revealed to us about ourselves as we find our way through: bring all of that, everything that makes us ourselves, and together, where ever we are, at this great universal table, a corner of which is found in each of our homes, let us gather and worship the God of creation, the Christ of bread and wine, the Spirit of this, and every, table.

**Prayer**

Loving God

Holy Creation

Spirit of imagination

And host at every table

May we gather

Not because we deserve to be here

But because there is no other place to be -

For in our fears and worries

In our brokenness and concerns

We need you

We need the truth of love

The promise of grace

The gift of forgiveness

And here may we find it

Generously offered

And gratefully received -

Loving God

In this moment

Of waiting at the table

May we pause

And know

The greatest love there is

Given for us all -

A place of welcome

A time of renewal

A moment of creation

A story to be retold

And a promise to trust -

Our Creator from heaven,

May your name be hallowed.

May your kingdom birth.

May your will come to bloom on the earth,

As it does in heaven.

May we receive today

Our share of the grain of the land.

Untangle the knots within us,

That we can mend our ties with others.

May we not be deluded by the world,

But freed to live more truly, justly, lovingly.

It is you who spoke the opening word of creation.

Out of you flows the first light of the cosmos,

Then and now,

And evermore.

Amen

**Scripture Introduction**

This is the final words of the book of Job. God has remained silent through all Jobs crises. God then speaks, as we heard last week in some beautiful poetry but its a bit like: how can you question me: do you have any insight what it is like being God? And then, this week, it seems Job repents: I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

It is very dissatisfying to say the least, and almost a crushing blow on all those whose lives lead them to question God. But like all biblical texts, taking them at face value is not the only way they are designed to be read.

**Reading Job 42**

Then Job answered the Lord:

**2**

“I know that you can do all things,
    and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

**3**

‘Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?’
Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,
    things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. -

**4**

‘Hear, and I will speak;
    I will question you, and you declare to me.’

**5**

I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear,
    but now my eye sees you;

**6**

therefore I despise myself,
    and repent in dust and ashes.” -

**10**And the Lord restored the fortunes of Job when he had prayed for his friends; and the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. **11**Then there came to him all his brothers and sisters and all who had known him before, and they ate bread with him in his house; they showed him sympathy and comforted him for all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him; and each of them gave him a piece of money[a] and a gold ring. -

 **12**The Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; and he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand donkeys. **13**He also had seven sons and three daughters. **14**He named the first Jemimah, the second Keziah, and the third Keren-happuch. **15**In all the land there were no women so beautiful as Job’s daughters; and their father gave them an inheritance along with their brothers. -

 **16**After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children, and his children’s children, four generations. **17**And Job died, old and full of days.

**Reflection**

Normally at the end of a good family film, a happily ever after ending is just what you need. However Job is not a family favourite and the last thing it needs is a happy ending. It ruins all the powerful questioning that has gone on through the book. It’s as if the author got tired questioning God and decided it gets you no where. Job made a mistake questioning God. It’s a massive disappointment.

But if you are like me and find yourselves questioning God often, daily at the moment, then Job’s apology for daring to speak out about injustice, is unfaithful, because faith, if it is worth anything, is that relationship, that dialogue, that dares explore the deeper questions when the easy ones are found empty.

There is another and to me a much healthier way to read Job’s response, by hearing the irony in Job’s voice:

Therefore I have uttered what I… “ did not understand… !,
    things… **too wonderful…** for me, which I… did not know.

That, surely, is closer to the spirit of the book: an ironic counter to God’s rhetoric last week. Remember: “Were you there when I make the heavens”, “have you ever walked in the depths of the oceans”, This week Job keeps the challenge hot: states that his speaking truth to power was perhaps more warranted than first realised. He still challenges God…

It leaves the whole question of suffering unanswered, but gives the question more integrity. Job pushes back on those who just give up and accept the injustices.

Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes, Job says at the end as if giving up. Read it that way if you wish, or read it as a challenge by Job. A more accurate version of that famous line that takes in the nuances and intent would be: Now that my eyes have seen you, I shudder with sorrow for mortal clay.

That is more in keeping with Job’s persistence to ask challenging questions about power and justice that faith demands to be asked in the face of injustice. And it is in that faith we are brought to this table.

Bread and wine speaks truth to power, this is where we come to regularly, in a world that is unjust and needs to be questioned. Job meets us here, and we hold up the bread and wine as a challenge to all power that is unjust. This table is a sign we do not give up on truth, on compassion, on love. When we break bread: we remind the world of the most powerful act of truth and love there has been, in the face of the world’s injustices, towards each other and towards creation.

The questions remain, life is ambiguous, faith does not have answers. Rather it is a relationship, that constantly speaks this truth to that power, which we need more now than ever before to an environment that will no longer be able to sustain humanity, for our cynically optimistic politics, and for our church which is on the brink of a major paradigm shift.

In gathering here, we stand with Job and his faith, and his questioning, even of God, to not just accept, but to challenge what is unloved, what is untruth, and what is unjust.

And in the breaking of this bread, may WE also have the strength and faith to do so.

**Welcome**

An open table. Gather round. It is where we belong.

Welcome all who are exploring life

Questioning God

Worried about the future

Who are holding on, just

This table is for you.

**Institution**

It was night and the shadows were lengthening.

The smells of the city were of lamb and herbs

But there was fear there too

Questions among the religious authorities

Questions among the temple courts

Questions among the disciples

And among it all, Jesus sat with the twelve and listened.

He listened to their stories and their memories and their laughter and their questions until he interrupted them all, not with words, but an act.

He took the bread that was lying on the table, bread made for the passover meal

And broke it. The snap brought their attention.

This bread is my body, broken for you, Eat of it all of you and remember me

He passed the bread around the twelve

Each snapping a piece and eating before passing it on

Then the cup, lifting it with the words: this cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood. Drink of it all of you and remember me

The bitter wine was passed round and they drank of it

Now there was silence because their questions hung there, unanswered and became their travelling companions over the events yet to come.

And as they did then

We do now.

Let us pray

**Prayer**

Creator

Loving God

Saviour at this table

Spirit of truth and life

In our gathering here

We gather in the story

That is still being told

May this bread and wine

Be for us

The words of grace that set us free

To be your truth for the world

Your challenge to the world

Your compassion in the world

And as we break bread

May we break open the question we need to ask

To speak truth into the power that binds us

And speaks life into the hope of creation

And speaks love into the fear of the world

And as we break this bread

And share in the wine of new promise

May we share the angel song:
Holy holy holy,

God of power and might

Heaven and earth are full of your glory

Hosanna in the highest

Blessed is the one who comes in God’s name

Hosanna in the highest.

Come spirit

The great questions of god

And be set free in the telling of this story

And call us out into the world

To be your story tellers

In loves name

So be it

Amen

**Communion**

Jesus said:

This bread is my body broken for you

Eat of it all of you and every time, remember me

This wine is the promise of God renewed

Drink of it all of you and every time, remember me

Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world

Have mercy on us

Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world

Have mercy on us

Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world

Grant us your peace

The gifts of God for the people of God

Let us share bread together and take of the cup

**Peace**

Peace be with you

Let me offer that hope, that gift, that promise again:
Peace be with you all.

**News**

**Prayers for others**

What shall we pray that we haven’t already prayed?

Ours is to continue to long prayer of hope

Of justice for the planet

love in our communities

Hear us O Creator -

May you tune into our discussions this week

Of environmental debate

And positive words

And precious plans

At COP26

And in among the high headlines

May we hear the truth as you hear it

About where the poor will find life

How the rich will take responsibility

How the west will redeem its past

And how the south will be given a better chance -

Hear us

Even though we can hardly the best green christians there are

But we know there is a cost of all of this

And may we in our prayers for the planet

Face that cost

Face our lifestyles

Face our expectations

For this summit is not about other people

Or other governments

Or other industry

It is really about those who care

And those who don’t

And may we find ourselves on the caring side. -

May we seek the questions faith needs to find

And explore what they open up

May we gather at every table

And share a banquet with refugee and asylum seeker

May we live more honestly in creation

Finding the world is there to care for us

When we care for her -

And so we pray for COP26

For leaders and attendees

For negotiators and development groups

That in all the questions asked

We find a way forward, together

Prioritising peace, compassion, humanity

Over profits and power and wealth -

And we pray for our community, our parish, our families

Those who share life with us most closely

For those who find themselves too close to Job’s experiences

Those who are ill physically and mentally

Those who hunger for the basics of life -

Loving God

Keep challenging us

Keep pushing us towards what is just and right and hopeful

For the sake of love

And in the name of the bread breaker

So be it

Amen -

**Benediction**