

# New Kilpatrick

Sunday 29th March 2020

Lazarus

John 11:1-45

## Introduction

*This is the script of this weeks podcast which you will find online through the church website. Please feel free to read as a reflection or read along as you listen to the podcast.*

*Welcome to our reflective podcast... The script for this podcast is online at [nkchurch.org.uk](http://nkchurch.org.uk)... and you can read along if you wish... It is good to gather like this... in our own ways and time... knowing we continue to make community... simply by sharing these thoughts... creating an echo of our presence... for each other... in God... Welcome to church!*

## Creating a Space

Last week... a number of people created their own unique gathering space in their homes... and we invite you to do so again... but you are invited to add a candle... real or imagined... Hold it in your minds eye... for its not the last we'll mention it today... Let us centre ourselves...

## Beginning Words

We gather  
because we can,  
in our own places,  
yet as one.

Beyond us  
our words are heard,  
our worries shared,  
our questions spoken,  
within God,  
for there they find  
their place of hearing  
is shared  
with the depths of love.

*Jeanette leads us in a prayer*



## Prayer

Loving God, it is only now that we are beginning to realise just how much of life we took for granted. The everyday things of going out when we wanted to, shopping, meeting friends and family. In the blink of an eye that has slipped through our fingers and we do not know when it will return. But in the uncertainty of it all we can begin to appreciate different things in life. And maybe some of the changes we import into our lives will transform it for ever more.

Creator God, just as we adapt and change so is the created world around us. Nature stepping back to allow creatures to return to old habitats, plants and trees working with the less polluted air, all within such a short amount of time.

Gracious God, as we move forward may we hold on to these changes, allow them to flourish and change our ways for good. May our love for neighbour include all living things as we turn away from greed, selfishness, and pride and let humility and love for one another be the new path. The only path. The path you ask us to follow.

Amen

### *The Lord's Prayer*

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 this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our debts  
as we forgive our debtors.  
Lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil,  
for thine is the kingdom,  
the power,  
and the glory for ever.  
Amen

## Reading

Jeanette reads for us now from Psalm 130



Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.

Lord, hear my voice!  
Let your ears be attentive  
to the voice of my supplications!

If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,  
Lord, who could stand?

But there is forgiveness with you,  
so that you may be revered.

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,  
and in his word I hope;

my soul waits for the Lord  
more than those who watch for the morning,  
more than those who watch for the morning.

O Israel, hope in the Lord!  
For with the Lord there is steadfast love,  
and with him is great power to redeem.

It is he who will redeem Israel  
from all its iniquities.



## Story

*Here's this week's story... a retelling like last week... We haven't changed the pattern of stories... These are the ones we'd have heard in church... and again one we know well... but again... we hear it differently in the context of isolation and coronavirus... You know... the bible has a habit of doing that... the oldest stories... heard anew... as they speak into our very contemporary situation...*

There was a man who was sick... called Lazarus... He was a friend of Jesus... a good friend in fact... He and his sisters... Mary and Martha... had met Jesus a number of times... but Lazarus was ill...

So the sisters sent word to Jesus to visit them... except he didn't... well not straight away... He got the message... but he lingered... dallied... He loved Mary and Martha and Lazarus... They were good friends... but Jesus didn't seem to feel the need to rush...

And it was two days later... that he turned to his disciples and said, "Let's go!"... So they did... But while the disciples knew how close Jesus was to the family... they also hesitated... They did that a lot... understandably... because they were not sure what was happening most of the time... They were worried for Jesus... Bethany was so close to Jerusalem... and the religious authorities were already seeking opportunity against him...

But there is a love that is deeper than fear... and so... Jesus travelled to Bethany...

The disciples looked at each other... and chose to say nothing... except the silence... and their eyes... said everything... so Jesus provoked them... "Lazarus has fallen... asleep!"...

"O, well... let him wake up in his own time!" said the disciples... "Mary and Martha can handle that... No need for us to go there!"...

But of course that's not what Jesus meant... and the disciples knew that wasn't what Jesus meant... but they feared for him... and that fear found every opportunity not to put him at risk...

You can imagine him rolling his eyes... "Listen, let's go... you are about to be given one almighty picture of what it means to trust"... and the silence that lingered... held it's own truth... "and this is the kind of trust you are all going to need... very soon"...

But when Jesus arrived at Mary and Martha's house... Lazarus was no where to be seen... It was too late... Jesus was too late... and as soon as Martha saw Jesus she simply broke down grieving and angry... "If only you had been here!"...

Jesus held Martha's arms as her fists pounded his chest... "Those who trust"... said Jesus... almost to himself... "will find life"...

Confused... they led him to the tomb... He paused, facing it... and from deep within him... there was a shudder in his shoulders... and loud snort... as Jesus... wept...

Whatever expectation the crowd had... it wasn't that... a weeping Saviour...

"Remove the stone!"... he called...

Everyone looked at each other... hesitating again...

"Remove it!"... and shouting for Lazarus to come out... he gave instruction... "Unbind him and let him loose!"...

## Song

*Kirsteen and Iain sing for us*

## Reflection

So how is isolation going for you all?... My room is particularly tidy now... and I've learned and used so many new bits of technology from online shopping to podcasting at an exponential rate...

my head hurt... Zoom and Anchor and Hangouts Meet... were all words that last week had no social media connection at all to me... but now are stock-in-trade of my working vocabulary...

*Isolation* has... ironically... opened up... a new world... and has done the same for our faith perhaps through these well known stories we hear at this time of year... because overly familiar tales told in a different context... open up new a new hearing...

Lazarus is a story about isolation... at so many levels... Lazarus obviously... Mary and Martha... who now would be on their own... the disciples who felt excluded... not knowing what was going on...

And that exclusion is felt in the very real... and deep cry from Martha... "If only you had been here,"...

What was she expecting... Did she believe Jesus could cure Lazarus... or did she just want a good friend to be with her at this time... In other words... did she believe things about Jesus... that he was a miracle worker and somehow that would make a difference... or did she find something in Jesus she trusted... the love, the compassion of another that gives you strength in these times?...

You see... John... the one who tells this tale... is not writing to our generation... He's writing to a much earlier one who understood the word 'belief'... more like our word 'trust'...

So we can say we 'believe' certain things *about* who Jesus was and is... but the word trust is deeper... and perhaps more worthwhile today... The things of belief will not help us... but trusting the love and compassion and tenacity of Jesus... might...



And as if to reinforce that point... **John** has that tiny verse... 'Jesus wept'... In many ways... one of the most significant there is... It counters all the reasoning and arguing and theologising... Jesus wept...

For here is the humanity of the man... the core of Jesus compassion... Not a saviour flown in to rescue us... but one who stands there... with his friends... and perhaps we can count ourselves among them... in the very realities of life...

So this story... is less a resurrection story... and more a story of hope... For the disciples it is a metaphor... that in the darkest times... and they will come soon for them... the most anxious times... and they are just around the corner... the most isolated times... they will be locked down themselves in an upper room in a few days time... they need to begin to trust... this is not how it ends...

And thus it is a story that says to us... despite the weeks to come... we're not going to be magically saved from all of this because of what we believe... but we are going to get thorough all of this... because of who and what we trust...

## Prayer

Loving God  
may we use others names for you  
Trust  
compassion  
presence  
companionship

with these names we call you  
as we remember our world  
for that is the God we need  
and the God we trust

So in that trust  
and compassion  
presence and companionship  
we pray...  
for our world  
our nation  
our community  
as we respond to coronavirus

May we be responsible  
towards each other  
knowing our choices  
are never individual  
but have consequences for everyone

We pray for NHS and carers  
for medics so vulnerable  
and hospitals so pushed

for volunteers  
in hospitals and communities  
helping to deliver and care

for neighbours and family  
all whom we worry about

we pray for those who are sick  
at home or in wards  
and family who are anxious in isolation

and for the least among us  
who are the most vulnerable



And we pray for our leaders  
the pressure on them  
making dramatic decisions  
managing our humanness to connect  
and the counter intuition not to

For a world that has found its levelling  
that affects us all  
but the poorest most

May we find the trust  
before the belief  
that speaks of love  
before doctrine  
that shares a compassion  
before we deserve it  
a human saviour  
before a Messiah

So be it  
Amen

## Intimations

And so we come to the intimations - you know you are still church when you have intimations...

The website is updated daily as is facebook... We're on instagram too and working on twitter... It's a lot so if there is anyone out there who might help us feed these different mediums... because the are hungry beasts... even a single story please contact us via the website... or [mail@nkchurch.org.uk](mailto:mail@nkchurch.org.uk)...

We send out an email at the beginning of each week... if you haven't received that last week... again the website has a page to subscribe in you press the 'Weekly News' button...

We write a mini-bulletin at the end of each week to download from the website

We have a Zoom vestry hour... which is just a big chat... Thursday 6.30-7pm... instructions on website...

Daily prayers... photos, poems and stories from around the congregation all on the website to encourage and cheer us... plus ideas for a talent show, concert, murder mystery, bookclub, weekly quiz night, name that tune, coffee afternoon...

So head over there... for all the places we are still meeting...



## Sending Words

'So, on this the fifth Sunday in Lent what we hold on to is hope. Because with hope there is a promise of something else to come. It is not the end, only the beginning of something new. There is trust in the Lord, for with the Lord there is steadfast love enduring all things and all times. The darkness is overcome. Mary and Martha found that when Jesus visited. The light of the world was with them and their lives were turned around. So today, as we still try to come to terms with everything that is happening, with all the continuous changes, and how we no longer have control over some of the choices we would normally make, keep that hope and trust with you. The trust and love of God will remain with us and sustain us as we move into another day.

## Benediction

Remember that candle mentioned at the beginning?... If you have a real one... you are invited to place it in your window... and light it tonight... and every night... for ourselves... our neighbours... the concerned... the worried... for them... let us offer a sign of trusting into the future...

Go in peace  
and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ  
the Love of God  
and the Commonwealth of the Holy Spirit  
be with us all  
evermore  
Amen

Thanks for being here... We'll be back next week... when it is Palm Sunday... and we'll share the story in ways we've never done before... Take care wherever you are in isolation... and let's fill the gaps between us again next week...