**New Kilpatrick**

**Podcast**

**9th October 2022**

**Luke 17:11-19**

**Gathering**

Liminal places

Borderlands with no demarkation

Wilderness places where the rules do not apply

Place of potential

Of creativity

Of danger and adventure

It is where we worship

Between places

Between heaven and earth

Between past and future

Between each other

This liminal place

Is our home in God

**Welcome**

Hello… I’m Roddy Hamilton, the minister of New Kilpatrick Parish and thank you that we can meet like that, share a sense of worship together, from wherever we are… We may not know each other or recognise each other face-to-face, but we make community, in this peculiar online place.

It feels like no-man’s land. We’re neither here nor there but in some pixelated, digital sense, we are in a liminal place. In a similar way, Jesus meets some lepers who come to him seeking healing, but unsure if it will happen. They may be rejected, accepted, shunned, healed. They are all in a vague place where the rules aren’t the same. No one knows what will happen. Welcome to the Demarkation Zone of the kingdom

**Prayer**

Loving God

In this borderland between yesterday and tomorrow

We gather

And meet you

Coming with all our burdens and joys

Which we live between each day

And we lay them here

In this borderland between earth and heaven

Past and future

Hurt and healing

Trusting you reach across

Meet us here

And gather all we bring

Into a love that crosses all borders

And barriers

Loving God

May we find a home here

When everything seems uncertain

And words no longer bring trust or security

And our leaders spin

And our world rocks

And we need security

In such a place as this

Liminal and dangerous as it is

May we meet you here

As know you as our comforter and our strength

And learn to live again

With confidence and wonder

In the wild places

The vulnerable places

The insecure places

The borderlands

Between now and what is yet to come

Hear us as we share the Global Prayer together

**Scripture Background**

Here we have, on the face of it, a story of healing. But what might interest us more today is where that healing takes place: between Samaria and Galilee a borderland, No-man’s land. It is an intriguing setting: a place where cultures and traditions mix, and the rules are unknown.

Or not, because we often find silos and circling of the wagons in such places, an evangelical defining ion who we are when everything else feels a little more chaotic. Yet such places are creative as well as dangerous. Here Jesus is crossing borders physically but also culturally and across traditions and in such a flexible, liminal place the kingdom can be reimagined, and what was thought impossible or incorrect, becomes possible and generous.

**Reading**

It happened that as he made his way toward Jerusalem, he crossed over the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered a village, ten men, all lepers, met him. They kept their distance but raised their voices, calling out, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!”

Taking a good look at them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.”

They went, and while still on their way, became clean. One of them, when he realised that he was healed, turned around and came back, shouting his gratitude, glorifying God. He kneeled at Jesus’ feet, so grateful. He couldn’t thank him enough—and he was a Samaritan.

Jesus said, “Were not ten healed? Where are the nine? Can none be found to come back and give glory to God except this outsider?” Then he said to him, “Get up. On your way. Your faith has healed and saved you.”

**Reflection**

We started our discussion group, think again, this week (every second Tuesday evening, alternating with the bible study). Part of our discussion, which is always free ranging, focused, as it always tends to do, on church and where we are going with it, how we are being reshaped and what we might to do enable that.

We never seem to settle on a conclusion, but this week what was perhaps felt was that everything is coming back to ‘normal’ again. Most of the things we did in the past, pre-pandemic era, are finding their way into our routine again. Many have changed their format certainly, some have not come back, but essentially, we have this sense of comfort that we’ve made it through, more or less. Normal service has resumed.

Not everyone is so sure that is the case, however. We’ve changed subtly. Sunday is more informal, sermons are no longer, midweek service is busier than ever, the Guild is for men and women now, and only one guild for everyone, we’ve needed bible study and didn’t realise it, and we are still wondering, more so now than before, what is going to happen to us as a congregation under presbytery plans.

Perhaps it is now we feel we are in an even more liminal place that we did during the pandemic. We are in a crossover, no-man’s land where we might be one thing or we might be another. The outcome hasn’t been settled yet.

And we may be here for a while. Which is fine. We’re in good company. God’s People have spent more time in liminal, wilderness places than being settled.

And when Jesus meets the ten lepers, they are all in that similar place. In between places. They are on the border between Samaria and Galilee. They aren’t in one place or another, they are in a liminal place.

And you really don’t want to waste your time in that kind of place. They are hugely creative yet dangerous places. Something might happen, Something might not. The ten may be healed or they might be rejected. The rules are unknown. No one is guided by Samarian or Jewish traditions. It’s all in the mix. And the tension between the options is almost red hot. The whole thing can go one way or another.

The lepers may be touched by Jesus, but they may be ostracised forever. Who knows? They don’t.

In such places, there are opportunities for danger and opportunities for growth, and we can find ourselves, orientate ourselves again into a different shape, and understanding, and experience of God. God’s People live in these places and have been shaped by such experience for generation: wilderness years for the Hebrews, Babylon exile for the Jews, Jesus 40 days followed by temptation, disciples living between Good Friday and Easter Day, all liminal places where there was the opportunity for growth or disaster, where questions could be tried and potential tapped, dangerous yet creative.

This is our place right now. Between things. Yes, the worst of the pandemic is likely to be over, we are managing to live our lives in this new normal, but we haven’t settled yet. Far from it. We are still in the borderlands between what we once were and who we are yet to be, open to unknown potential. We are companions with the lepers looking for a miracle and wondering what we will set in motion by being here, where the normal rules don’t apply.

As the writer Rick Morley says, we’re in a place where we can “reorientate ourselves to shape what the next room we’ll inhabit will look like”. Creative and dangerous. And very much alive.

**News**

**Prayer**

In these crossover places we pray for an impossible peace

An impossible feast for those living in famine

An impossible community for those left behind with welfare

To reshape the room we’ll next inhabit

Reshape the world for tomorrow

Reimagine the church for the future

In the border between compassion and idealism

We meet those who do not benefit from economics

In the border between rich and poor

We meet those for whom the rules are stacked against them

In the border between environment and climate

We meet those who suffer first from the consequences of how we live

In the border between have and have-nots

We meet those who are blamed for their own situations

May we come together and find a moral way of living

That speaks towards what is fair and just, loving and compassionate

To reshape the room we’ll next inhabit

Share with those we love in family and friends

Those ill physically and mentally

Worried and anxious

May we find that meeting place

Where all things are possible and the kingdom feels real

So be it

Amen

**Benediction**