

DERRIFORD URC NEWS LETTER

THE LIGHT, LIFE AND LOVE OF JESUS IN OUR COMMUNITY



13TH JUNE 2021

55 years ago on Friday this week (11th June 2021) our church building went up! 55 years of God's service in and through Derriford Church using these building to touch the community of Derriford and its surrounding areas.



What a wonderful privilege to be part of this history. Think about all those incredibly special people who have served God in and through Derriford Church. All the lives that have been changed and all those people who are now in glory because of Derriford's ministry. Many of you have been here for lots of these years. Why not take a few moments to pray for some of those people from the past? If they are still alive, why not pray a blessing on them and if they have gone to glory, then give God praise for using them so powerfully in both yours and the church's life.

I wonder what the cost of building these premises were 55 years ago? Not cheap, I am sure! What an amazing gift these pioneers have given us, and all those who have served in-between. Those men and women that raised the money by all sorts of means, to be able to plant into God's Kingdom here in Derriford. I am fairly sure that, like the Master to his servants in Matthew 25, God said to them, 'well done you good and faithful servant'.

You know, soon it is going to be our turn to invest (time, money, energy, prayer, heartache and more) into the future Kingdom here in Derriford. If we are true to God and to this new opportunity, none of us will see all the amazing work that will be done in and through our new building (or repaired – which ever we decide), just like all those servants previously have not seen all that has been done in and through our buildings. But isn't that exciting? That is what we are called to do, invest in the future. To step out in faith, knowing that God is working His purposes out.

I'm excited, I hope you are?

Summary of Sunday's Sermon/Service

The lavishly extravagant father

Luke 15:11-32

This is a great, great story but, I do think we have the wrong emphasis when we focus so much on the son who 'gets lost' and not on the true focus of the story. The father. For me, the Parable should be called, The Lavishly Extravagant Father! You see the story starts by saying, there lived a man who had two sons, so instantly we see that the story is about the man with two sons and not one of the sons.

I'm sure we all know that the man (the father) here represents God and the son who was lost but is now found represents us (you and I). So, the story here is about the joy in heaven when one of these 'sinners' (you and I) come back to Him. For me, and I guess for most people, the surprise comes, not in the fact that God loves us – most of us (although not

everyone) have been brought up through the church to know and understand that God loves us – read John 3:16.

Now, before we look at this passionate reunion in a little more detail. Let's have a quick look at some of the other parts of this story. We don't see it, in our culture, but the younger son is absolutely shameful. When he says to his father, I want my share of your estate, he is saying basically I want you out of my life, in fact he is saying I want you dead. I want all that I can get out of you, and I want it now. I'm not interested in you and who you are. It is horrible – let's not mince words. The Pharisees and the teachers and anyone else who would have been listening would have been shocked at this request! This is pretty evil! Horrible! Shameful!

And then, what's more, is that the father does it! I am guessing, but what I would have expected the hearers to have anticipated next was the son getting kicked out, disowned, told that he's no longer part of the family, not welcome here anymore and has now nothing to inherit. But no, what this father does is, says OK, my lovely son if that is what you want, take it all and go with my blessing! It is unthinkable. We miss this in our culture of tolerance.

So here he is at the lowest point, with absolutely nothing – not even food to eat and he decides to go home, but he goes, but before he even gets there. The father sees him and runs to greet him! Again, a lavishly extravagant father, what does he do – he girds up his loins and runs to his son. The one that totally rejected him! And again, culturally absolutely unacceptable! Now that is forgiveness, that is true grace, isn't it?

Four things that this lavishly extravagant father, does for his wayward son, and that shows us what it means for us and our relationship with God:

1. **He has a celebration.** This son of mine was dead but now is alive! (What beautiful words!). The son that he thought he had lost forever is home. Smelly, dirty, cold, alone, ashamed yes, but home! And the father wants a party of parties to celebrate. Wonderful stuff! We know, don't we, from Luke 15:7, that there is a great celebration (a party of parties) in heaven when a sinner repents. So when



we repented of living apart from God, when we turn back to him and say you are mine and I am yours! The Angels party and celebrated! Who says God's not a party person?

2. **Second the best robe is brought out and put on the son!** One of the things about robes is that they cover up all the dirt! You can be as mucky as you like underneath and no one can see. When the



father put the robe around his wayward son all the past, all rubbish and the pig pen dirt and smells, are hidden. In essence (from the world's viewpoint) he is as clean as the next person and when we look at the cross of Jesus, we see the same thing His blood covers us and makes us clean, but this time not from the world but from God Himself! Wow! When God looks at us – He doesn't see the sinful, shameful fallen us – He sees the robe of Jesus' all around us and says, 'that's my boy', 'that's my girl'.

3. **The father puts the ring on his son's finger.** Now the assumption here is that it is the family ring (now it doesn't actually say that!) but that is what is assumed. So, the family ring gives the son authority. It would have been the stamp that could authorise; could seal contracts and agreements. Not only has the son been cleansed but has also been given his authority back! I wonder if we really know what we are in the Kingdom of God, because of what Jesus has done for us!? Romans 8:17 says we are heirs and co-heirs of the Kingdom with Christ! What does that mean for us when we walk this world!?
4. **And last son is given sandals for his feet!** Shoes and sandals are made for walking, for doing, for working. They are not slippers to leisure around in. It is fairly clear I think that God made people not to be idle. In the armour of God, the feet are fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. The Gospel is Good News – it needs to be shared. News is only news if it is told! So the son is accepted back into the family business, to work – he is not excluded, he is to work. Again, when we are called, we are called into service; otherwise we may as well go straight to heaven. We are called to be about our father's business. In Romans 10 it says "how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" Our calling, to be about our Father's business, is to share that message – the Gospel of Peace. The Good News.

To close, let me ask a question if God, that lavishly extravagant Father, is for us who can be against us?

God Bless you

If you would like to listen to the whole service including, the sermon, the hymns, the readings and prayers you can find it on the link below.

<http://www.derrifordchurch.co.uk/sunday-6th-june-2021-morning-service/>

This **coming Sunday morning's service** is being led by Lucy and the title is **Sink or Swim**, and she is taking the reading from **Genesis 6:9-22**. If you are able, please do try to read this before the service on Sunday. I'm really looking forward to it – what a great Bible story Noah and the Ark. Also, Lucy is leading communion again this week. So, for you at home, please have your bread and wine available.

This Week's Notice slide

— Notices

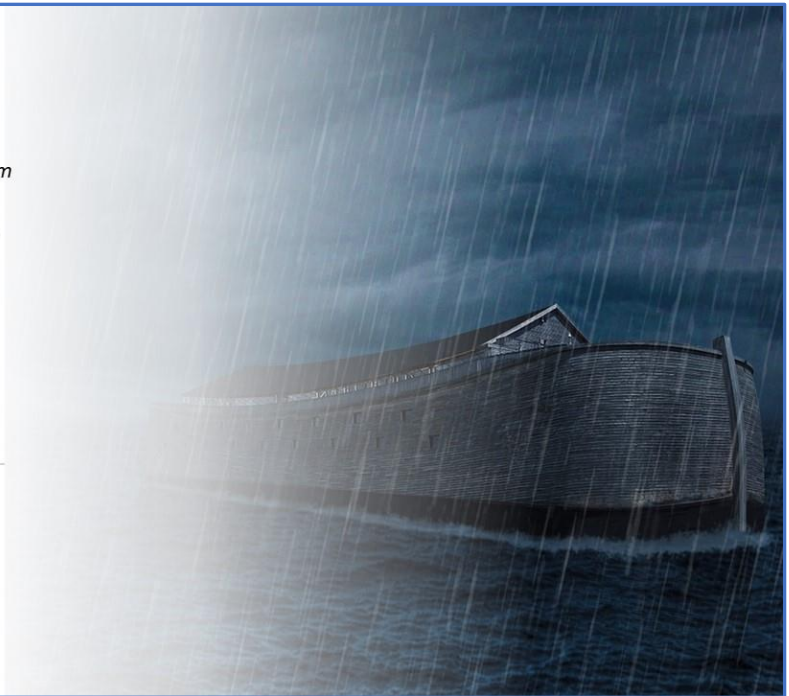
- Tuesday Prayers (9:15am) on Zoom
- Sunday Service (10:30am) (*both on Zoom and in Person*)
- 15th June is our next Nooma (7:30pm)

11th July (10:30am)

Mayflower 400 service on the Hoe
Minibus available – see Mark

*Our reading and theme
this week is*

*Sink or Swim
Genesis 6:9-22*



Prayer Pointers...

Praise: “To them (the Lord’s people) God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Colossians 1:27 NIV

Church: Pray for God’s glory to be filling our church, filling our hearts, so that we can tell others about what a glorious Saviour we have, and that He is accessible to all.

Local: Holiday traffic is inevitably causing lots of traffic jams, pray for the safety of all travellers and those working in the emergency services.

National: Pray peace where there is anger, frustration and disappointment for all those people unable to go on much needed holidays because of a change in restrictions due to the virus.

Any prayer requests please text / email Lucy on:
lucyparker59@yahoo.co.uk / 07503 003250

Future Events...

Feast of Fun. Hopefully, we will be doing another Feast of Fun in the Summer holidays and again hopefully (and prayerfully) a little more physical – with games for the children and good food for all. Dates to be decided soon. We will organise a meeting in the near future to discuss ideas etc. So keep thinking and praying. Thank you

Derriford Film Club We have had three of these now and I don't know about anyone else but I have enjoyed watching the films with all you folk. Our next film will be on Tuesday 6th July (7pm) and will be War Room. This is a wonderful Christian film about the power of prayer. Have a look at the trailer:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yx5kpJ5mkeE>

Nooma will start again this month – **Tuesday 15th June – Tuesday this coming week**). Hope the date is in your diary? We will be looking at video number 6 called Kickball.

Other Church stuff...

Our Building etc.



No major news this week, other than to say (which is exciting) that our wonderful Guide Dogs people and the Art Club have both said they would like to continue to use the church while the hall is out of action. Great news.

Mayflower Celebration, Worship event on the Hoe (11th July 10:30am).

On the 11th July there is a Plymouth wide service on the Hoe to celebrate the 400 years since the Mayflower. It starts at 10:30am and we have been loaned a minibus by Plymouth College which will enable us to take people to the Hoe for the service! ***Won't it be great to celebrate this very special event with other churches in Plymouth?***



Please let me know if you want like a place on the minibus.

Don't forget, in the afternoon there are all sorts of things going on, again to celebrate the Mayflower. More details on:

<https://www.mayflower400uk.org/news/2021/april/book-now-to-see-plymouths-spectacular-international-mayflower-commemoration-event-this-july/>

Please note, if you want to go in the afternoon you will need to book a place (see website above).

Prayer and reading list updating. This is really important – I have only had one person come forward. Please do think about it!! We are looking to build up our lists of people within the fellowship who would be prepared to read the scriptures or lead us with our prayers of intercession in church. Please let me know which, or both, you'd like to do! We are going to be looking at some simple (and fun) training to help if you have not done it before. Also, it doesn't matter if you are generally on Zoom or in person, we are trying to enable both to be engaged.

Please think about this

Overseas Mission. Have you read Matthew 24:14 recently?

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

One of the areas that is so important is reaching all the nationals. In the passage above we can see that all nations will be reached before Jesus returns. Part of our responsibility here is for the church, as well as local mission, is to reach out to those further away. We are trying to look at how we do this by supporting overseas missions. We would like your help. Who should we support? I have had a few (3) suggestions but would like more. Please, is there an organisation (preferably smallish, so we can see that we make a difference) that we could support overseas together?

And this

Lots of blessing to you all over the coming week. Enjoy the sunshine and I hope to see you all on Sunday, either in person or on Zoom.

God bless you all.

Mark

