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Broomhill Hyndland  
Parish Church

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*"Lighting the Way"*

for **Sunday 4 October 2020**

Dear friends

Welcome to another Sunday service and more obvious Autumnal times.

This Sunday our Zoom Service, as you will see, takes place at 2.30pm when we will share the Sacrament of Communion together because the Holy Spirit makes it so.

For those of you who will attend the 10.30am service at Naseby, thank you for phoning and attending. I appreciate all your efforts as we try to meet in so many different ways. Can I encourage you, if you are one of the fifty, to come to Naseby that little bit earlier. It is important during these restrictions that the Risk Team and the Duty Team have the time to guide you to the appropriate seating and that, to put it bluntly, you are not all piling in at the last minute!!

Can I thank Julie for doing sterling work last Sunday, both in the morning and the evening. Julie is great to work with but at the moment it is one or the other - you can't get both!! I had a couple of days off and I thank you for all the texts asking if I managed to relax. I will be off from work on the school holiday week but it is my intention to still conduct the Sunday service - that's the plan but some work for the Presbytery has also taken up time, so you never know.

Soon the WD40 service will return fortnightly at Kingsborough, so we are making progress.

Can I also send congratulations to the Murray clan. I had the pleasure of conducting Alyson and Jason's wedding and now they have a baby boy, as Ian described, 'just out of the wrapper.' Murray William Carroll is doing well.

Every blessing, George

Pentecost 19A Sunday 4 October 20 (Proper 22)

**CALL**

Feed our souls, O Lord, with bread of heaven,  
that we be prepared for eternity,  
and pour the waters of your holiness into our souls,  
that every work and action may be a joyful sign of your love.

**READING : Matthew 21: 33-46**

**ILLUMINATION**

Most Gracious God, we praise you once more in this sacred space. We come, to be reminded of your love and your expectations of our living. We are like the

vine planted, watered and protected. We know in our hearts that we need, want and desire your presence in our lives. So we come, to listen for your Word to speak to our hearts and reveal your desire for us. AMEN

## REFLECTION

'I'm sorry to tell you but you have failed,' said the Driving Instructor with the name 'No Pass Cass'. A crushing blow to Nikki Lauda – perhaps that's why I failed!

Sitting in my bedroom all those years ago, I opened what was known then as O Grades (today's National Fives). Slipping the certificate from the bottom up out of the brown envelope, my face fell with the marks that I had received.

Failure had come to haunt me again.

I have failed in many things, if I am honest - relationships, tests, some aims in congregations, interviews for specific jobs. Some have been my fault, some have not, but I have known degrees of failure in my life.

The Parable of the Vineyard, like many parables, is well known. Allegorically, the landowner is God who leaves his vineyards to tenants to look after but after seeing the disaster that has been made, the failings to maintain the grapes, the story ends with the landowner sending his son who the tenants kill as well.

It is a development from the story in Isaiah, a love story of God giving a vineyard to Israel only to see sour grapes being produced.

Today, I want you to read the story with the word 'failure' in your mind. We could have read the story thinking, as we did at Harvest, about ownership and the fact that the land and our lives are given in trust to look after.

We could have focussed on 'violence', for that is what the crowd expected the landowner to do, once his son was killed and we would reminded ourselves that God was not a vengeful God...

... but no..

be like true Scots and think of how well we fail – successfully!!!

Failure is a funny thing: we see it as the other side of the coin – flip in one way, it is heads and we've won, or tails, we've lost. One is positive and one is negative.

I think back to failing my first driving test...

I think back to friendships gone...

I think back to the extra study needed because success did not come my way first time around...

how did I feel then?

Embarrassment, shame, disappointment, loss of esteem.

The crowd in the parable certainly would have presumed that the tenants would have feared for their lives if the landowner came to visit them personally.

But failure is a necessary prerequisite of invention, which requires risk taking. Failure provides insights that cannot be gained from success: it provides insights in a country trying to deal with a pandemic, a church trying to find its feet and, on a personal level, it teaches us about who we are as a people.

Some of the most significant people in God's story of redemption are plagued by failures, though eventually they moved beyond that experience... they must

have been Scottish for they were 'successful failures'!

Moses was a murderer;

Jacob and Esau schemers and conspirers;

Peter a denier; Paul 'a chief amongst sinners' because he persecuted the church; the disciples as a whole who ran away and of course Judas, who took failing to the extreme.

The point is, that by and large, these people, despite constant failures were transformed, they found redemption despite their mistakes. It could be depressing reading this parable if we concentrate on failure being a negative – look what happened to the vineyard, but that is not what the Bible teaches us. Why the Bible is so relevant is that it points to these people, as it does to us, and tells us that it is not the making of mistakes that pulls us down but the not trying.

We have to embrace 'failure' not to rationalise sinfulness. God does not require or expect perfection. Sometimes we set the bar so high that we fear trying in case it goes awry. In our Christian living we will have problems and within these difficulties we need to embrace them and learn from them. We accept failure because we are human – that's just the way it is.

But I'm reminded of the words of John Calvin that 'God loved us before Christ died for us.' God loved us before we were redeemed through his death at Calvary.

The Parable of the Vineyard makes this point clear, 'When the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do?' asks Jesus and to their response of 'he will kill them', Jesus responds, 'Haven't you read the Scriptures?'

So in my scrap book of my faith journey, with letters of thanks, pictures that bring back joyful memories of celebrations, inductions, quiz nights, leavings and new beginnings, there are failings too –

it tells me who I am

and it tells me who God is, loving me no matter what.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN

## **MUSICAL INTERLUDE** - Ye Gates

(Have your hymn book open at CH4 – No 19)

## **PRAYER**

To you, O Lord, we lift our hearts.

Be mindful of your mercy and be faithful to your love.

You are full of life –

from the galaxies to the glaciers,

from the rivers to the rainbows,

from the north and the south,

the east and the west,

with music and mystery all the world over.

Your life runs through all of creation  
and your image is reflected in the diverse beauty of every face.  
How excellent you are,  
O God most high,  
how glorious and good.

To you, O Lord, we lift our hearts,  
be mindful of your mercy and be faithful to your love.

Around your table of life, celebrating your feast of joy,  
we are but one part of your image on earth.  
As we take and eat the broken bread,  
we remember with those from whom we are separated,  
whether by distance or division.  
As we taste and drink the crushed grapes,  
we hold in prayer those lives that have been devastated  
by earthquake and hurricane, by illness and violence.

To you, O Lord, we lift our hearts.  
Be mindful of your mercy and be faithful of your love.

The works of your hands thrill and inspire us, O God.  
The revelations of your Spirit humble and disquiet us.  
In wisdom you have dismissed every excuse  
we've given for separation from one another and from creation.  
May our hymns bring about awareness that we share one breath.  
May our prayers attune our hearts and minds to be of the same accord.  
May this meal remind us that we share one love.

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

### **AMEN**

### **INVITATION**

This was just a cup filled with wine;  
this was just ordinary bread, baked for guests  
until Jesus took them;  
took and drank from the cup,  
even though it was his cup of pain,  
filled with the agony of the world;  
took and broke the bread –  
even though his body was too young to be broken.

We would be ordinary lives unless the bread, unless the wine,  
is poured into us:  
and the mystery of grace takes place.

Come, not because you fully understand,  
but because you need to reach out  
and receive the life that is offered to you.

### **FRACTION**

We share bread and wine together  
remembering the words of that ancient meal...  
Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it,  
and gave it to his friends.  
Eat and Remember.

He poured the wine, offered thanks for it,  
and shared it with his friends.  
Drink and Remember.

Ancient symbols.  
Common acts.

### **THE PEACE**

The Peace of Christ be with you all

### **PRAYER**

I have a favourite, Lord –  
the grape Primitivo di Manduria.  
I love its richness, its dark cherry taste with a hint of plum.  
Blessed by the hot Mediterranean sun,  
tempered by the scirocco winds, this wine is a gem.  
I also have a dream, Lord –  
a project in retirement,  
of having a modest vineyard in Southern Italy.  
Then I think of your vineyard,  
so much good stock, planted over the centuries,  
propagated all over the world  
producing new and exotic blends of faith in far-off places,  
where workers are willing and empowered,  
where water once more becomes wine  
and enemies, friends.  
But,  
look how that good stock has withered,  
victim of neglect and abuse, tended now by the weak,  
by those who find it hard to bend, to mend the fences.  
And when the owner returns  
what will he say when he sees the state of the crop,  
the distraction of the workers,  
the watery wine?



Father, forgive us,  
for not stripping off the leaves that shade the fruit,  
for not ripping out the committees,  
the coffee mornings and the fayres,  
the continuation of customs by their sell-by-date  
that absorb moisture and light, time, money and energy  
that was destined to grow the fruit of the Spirit.  
What have we done to your wine, Lord?  
No Manduria grape here.  
Lord,  
you had things to say to your tenants,  
you trusted them with the best stock,  
root and branch of David  
but you found only sour grapes.  
What will you say to we, the successors,  
who have produced insipid grape juice  
from vineyards where we have allowed weed to choke,  
poor soil and blight which goes unchecked.  
The stock is still good  
but where are the tenants with their sleeves rolled up  
willing to work?  
Where are those who work for the Kingdom vineyard?  
I've changed my mind, Lord,  
I love Manduria...  
but a vineyard?

### **BENEDICTION**

May God who plants vineyards  
call you to work for justice and righteousness.  
May God who breaks down walls  
release you to work for justice and righteousness.  
May God who offers new life  
sustain you as you work  
for justice and righteousness.  
May you be blessed  
in the knowledge that you are a child of God.

Go in Peace, and may the Blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with you all. AMEN

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