



19 February 2012

Our Vision: all welcomed and respected

“Thinking allowed; thinking aloud allowed”

Minister: Rev Dr Robyn McPhail
Organists: Diane Paterson (Kerikeri) Clyde Foster (Kaeo)
Readers: Diane Paterson (Kerikeri) John Argent (Kaeo)

Gather in Jesus' Name



Call to Worship

Look carefully: God is doing a new thing.
 It has taken root and is greening,
 for those with eyes to see it.
 God makes smooth paths through the wilderness,
 and creates living streams in desert places.
 This is the living God.
 This is our God
 who blots out our transgressions
 and does not hold our sins against us.

<http://www.bruceprewer.com/DocB/BEIPHANY7.htm>

The peace of Christ be with you
 AND ALSO WITH YOU
 Kia tau te rangimārie o te Karaiti ki runga ki a koutou
 KI A KOE ANŌ HOKI

Song *We sing a love* tune: Woodlands WOV109

BLESSING FOR THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Prayer Hidden Wholeness

Gracious and Holy God,
 we gather this morning,
 opening to your healing power.
 We do not understand all the things
 that make us whole,
 nor the mystery of all that cripples us
 in body, mind, and spirit.
 But we do know this:
 that the presence of Christ,
 the hidden wholeness coursing
 through your wondrous universe,
 weaves, from the dropped threads of unfinished lives,
 a fabric of unmatched beauty.
 We come this morning,
 seeking less to understand this Healing Source
 than to open ourselves
 to its sacred flow,
 released in us
 through this simple act of gathering,
 singing, praying, and holding one another
 and our beautiful, broken planet

in your love.

Amen.

“Hidden Wholeness” by Bruce Sanguin, in *If Darwin Prayed: Prayers for Evolutionary Mystics*, Vancouver 2010, p.122

Symbol of God's Presence

Song [KK] *May your roots go deep* [Diane's choice]

[KAEO] *I give you my heart* [John's choice]



Engage

Conversation with the Word

Last week I'd given the title “Healing Poverty's Illness” to a sermon that was on the edge of being written when I decided to go to Christchurch. Jan picked up on this and told a superb story that points us directly to the pathway for healing poverty's illnesses. It was about a young woman soon to be married who contracted leprosy and then, out of the devastation, discovered God's call for her. In the hospital she was alongside women who knew the grip of poverty too well. One with them, she helped bring healing – whole person care – and transformed the hospital and the women, as well as being transformed herself.

Alongside, at one. Today I invite you to make connections that again cross boundaries of poverty and sufficiency, with our last healing story from Mark's gospel before Lent. For these stories are not just physical miracles for fortunate individuals: they are challenges to social order within which some individuals are pushed to the outer just because they don't measure up. Because they are troubled, because they are female, because they are sick, and most of all because they are poor. So as we listen we hold in mind connections with the need for healing we know in ourselves and connections with the need for healing we know in others, especially those pushed to the outer in today's social order.

I want to begin with Jesus' key words as Mark tells it:

“Your sins are sent away.” Mark 2:5

There's a song I'd love to play for you but I'm not sure you'd thank me. The rock band *Metallica* has sung amazingly perceptive songs about the human condition. I recall thinking perhaps in this we're hearing a modern day Isaiah – poetry that evokes the reality we're often trying to run away from. One song is called “The Unforgiven” and it's the strongest prayer of confession and lament I've ever heard. This is sin. This is the tangled mess in control of human life – shackled.

The music you'll hear is by a group of four cellists called *Apocalyptica*. As they play I'll read the lyrics.

The Unforgiven (as sung by Metallica)

New blood joins this earth
And quickly he's subdued
Through constant pain disgrace
The young boy learns their rules
With time the child draws in
This whipping boy done wrong
Deprived of all his thoughts
The young man struggles on and on he's known
A vow unto his own
That never from this day
His will they'll take away

What I've felt
What I've known
Never shined through in what I've shown
Never be
Never see
Won't see what might have been
What I've felt
What I've known
Never shined through in what I've shown
Never free
Never me

So I dub thee unforgiven
They dedicate their lives
To running all of his
He tries to please them all
This bitter man he is
Throughout his life the same
He's battled constantly
This fight he cannot win
A tired man they see no longer cares
The old man then prepares
To die regretfully
That old man here is me

What I've felt
What I've known
Never shined through in what I've shown
Never be
Never see
Won't see what might have been
What I've felt
What I've known
Never shined through in what I've shown
Never free
Never me
So I dub thee unforgiven

You labeled me
I'll label you
So I dub thee unforgiven

Peter Cunnah and Al McKenzie

Unforgiven is about still being in the grip of what's happened to us, and what's happening around us. Paralysed.
“Your sins are sent away”. That's what is needed.

Mark 2:1-12

On the outer himself after healing the leper, Jesus did manage to slip away home some days later. But the rush of those in need – on the outer themselves – fills the place to the brim. He's responding to them, making a whole person response to them, action and word. The message is the Kingdom, God's way taking charge in which there is a radical inclusion, and this is not some middle of the road, feel good and welcoming thing, but means accepting even the worst of the conventionally unacceptable. And shalom – well-being, peace, justice – for everyone, and again that's not some middle of the road, feel good and peaceful thing, but a economic and political upheaval of the way things are.

Only with that kind of upheaval and radical inclusion will poverty's illnesses, everyone's disease, be healed. Sins sent away.

Now today's section of Mark's narrative helps us see an important aspect of this human problem of not being well, the disease, and the tangled mess or shackles we call sin. It's paralysis. Physical, yes, that's for real for people. Also emotional, intellectual, and deep inside (i.e. spiritual) paralysis. Whenever a person gets stuck in their situation, mind-set, negativity, attitude, ill-health, etc. etc.

Paralysis of any kind means, of course, that it's not possible to do anything about it yourself. Being stuck means being stuck. Without friends, without the compassionate and sometimes risk-taking actions of others, there's no way up out of the hole. Without, in the case of this scripture, four friends caring enough and pushy enough, to get their man to Jesus' attention.

What they do is put this person right into the middle of the action in the household. From the edge to the centre. And once that happens he's part way already to being made well. Imagine the shift from alone and injured at the scene of an accident to being surrounded by care and attention. Think too of the advertisements for it's not ok: one person alone in their knowledge of what's happening or what they are doing, alone and surrounded by cardboard cutouts of other people, until one cut-out person becomes a real person and asks “are you ok?”

Part way there already, when that happens.

Jesus looks at them and sees the Kingdom in action. Their faith – their understanding and trust of God's order, not the world's order, compassion and responsibility for one another not 'suck it up' and cope with your own bad karma. An understanding also of sin, something we struggle to get our heads around even more than faith.

By taking paralysis as symptomatic of what our biblical and faith heritage refers to with the sin, we can surely glimpse its 21st century relevance. It is real. Burdens that pile up on us through experience are real: memories, mistakes, hurts received, hurts inflicted, fears that won't go away. Negative patterns of behaviour, or reactions triggered in a person by others, especially people close to them, are real, and they are real issues that can seem impossible to address. A tangled mess – that is my favourite image for sin, and there has never been any difficulty finding a tangible example in my knitting bag.

The mess, says Jesus, is hereby unravelled – your sins are sent away. God alone can do it, as the scribes argue, but they can't see that God is already doing it, through the action of the friends and through this new centre of life and well-being that Jesus provides, just by being who he is and trusting God's kingdom ways totally. Once anyone lines up with this new centre, lines up with Jesus and puts oneself within that kingdom shape of values and beliefs, then the mess does simply unravel. The past is not a problem any more. The future is no longer to be feared. The paralysing grip is of either gone.

In Metallica's words, it's like Jesus is saying: “I dub thee forgiven.

Respond

Offering Song *Shackled by a heavy burden*

Prayers

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle: Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain

... *prayer book prayers...*

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the sun that always rises, but never sets.
You are the source of all life, creating and sustaining every living thing.
You are the source of all food, material and spiritual, nourishing us in both body and soul.

YOU ARE THE LIGHT THAT DISPELS THE CLOUDS OF ERROR AND DOUBT, AND GOES BEFORE ME
EVERY HOUR OF THE DAY,
GUIDING MY THOUGHTS AND MY ACTIONS.

MAY I WALK IN YOUR LIGHT,
BE NOURISHED BY YOUR FOOD,
BE SUSTAINED BY YOUR MERCY,
AND BE WARMED BY YOUR LOVE.

<http://www.oikoumene.org>

INVITE THE SUNDAY SCHOOL BACK

Continuing the Conversation

Lord's Prayer

Serve God



Song [KK] *The kingdom is within you*

[KAEO] *Christians are all kinds of people*

Blessing

God is a God who takes infinite risks
with people like us.
Go in faith and hope
to be part of the recreating of the world.

Dorothy McRae-McMahon *Liturgies for the Journey of Life*

...*A-men, a-men, a—men.*

Robyn McPhail
19.02.2012

Sermon Notes available as usual today – to have at hand during the service and/or to take home and share

Screen Sheets available in Kerikeri for those who have trouble seeing the screen
Morning Tea – Kerikeri: in Social Centre following the Service

ECHURCH: Sunday services are available on-line at <http://kaeokerikeriunionchurch.org.nz/services> Notices can be found on our Facebook page – click link on home page of the website. Facebook users: click 'like' and you'll get updates on your newsfeed.

NOTICES FOR TODAY – 19 February 2012

Minister: Robyn McPhail 401 7554, Mobile 021 0247 6280

Fax 401 7555, email: robyn@chirmac.co.nz

Church Office: 407 8250 (Message machine)

Find us at www.kaeokerikeriunionchurch.org.nz and on Facebook

Notices: Jenny Phillips 407 8883 email jenny.jane@xtra.co.nz

LECTIONARY READINGS FOR SUNDAY 26 FEBRUARY 2012

Genesis 9:8-17

Psalms 25:1-10

1 Peter 3:18-22

Mark 1:9-15

ROSTERS FOR SUNDAY 26 FEBRUARY 2012

Organists: Jean Andrewes (Kerikeri) Clyde Foster (Kaeo)

Readers: Jessica Scott (Kerikeri) tba (Kaeo)

Door and Tea: Elaine and Ian Wright

KERIKERI SINGERS: Practice following Sunday Service allowing time for tea and chat.

LECTIONARY STUDY: Restarting 20 February at 2.30pm–4pm at 22 Fairway Drive, Kerikeri.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING: Tuesday 21 February at 7.30pm at Kaeo.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE: Wednesday 22 February at 11.00am at 7 Kerikeri Grove.

COMMUNION SERVICES: Today at 4.00pm at Ted Robinson Chapel, Kerikeri. Next Sunday 26 February at 12.45pm at Kauri Lodge

KERIKERI HOME GROUP: 24 February at 6.30pm – 8.00pm at church office tea room.

NEW PEOPLE NEEDED ON THE BIBLE TEAM at Riverview school, to replace those who finished last year. Starting in March, Monday afternoon, Friday 9.00am. Training and children's workbooks are provided, and the class teacher supports, so there are no discipline problems. Please consider whether God might be calling you to this exciting and rewarding outreach! Teacher or helper, one term or several, we need whatever you can offer. Ph Heather 4077265 for more info. If you'd like to go along with Robyn to her class (Fridays 9am), to see what it's like, just give her a call 4017554 or robyn@chirmac.co.nz

A CHRONIC ILLNESS SELF MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME will be offered free of charge in Kerikeri starting Wednesday 29th February at 9.30a.m. at Kingston House, Hone Heke Road. The programme known as WHAKAMANA HAUORA Wellbeing and Empowerment - is aimed at providing support, education and self management skills for people who live daily with the challenges of chronic health conditions – Heart and Breathing conditions, Arthritis, Diabetes, Depression among others. The group programme consists of 6 once weekly sessions and is open to anyone with health problems.

For further information or to sign up to the course please call Diane Henare 021 1504631 or 09402562 or Margot Forrest 027 4575436 or 09 4038147. Funded by Te Tai Tokerau PHO.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER Ecumenical Service "Let Justice Prevail" Friday 2 March 2012 at 7pm at St James' Church, Stone Store Hill Kerikeri.

Using material prepared by Christian women in Malaysia and adapted for use in Aotearoa New Zealand. Let Robyn or Jan know if you can help with readings.

SUBMISSIONS TO FNDC: The proposed "Right of Way" along the Fairy Springs Pool reserve track has been notified on the Far North District Council website under Public Notices. We have only just noticed it and there are now only two weeks until submissions close. Anyone can (and is encouraged to) write in as a member of the public in support of this ROW. Submissions must be made in writing and marked, "Attention: Property Legalisation Officer" Far North District Council, Private Bag 752, Kaikohe, and be in before 4:00pm **2nd March 2012**. Some of the reasons in favour of the ROW are:-

1. Traffic safety, it gets turning traffic further away from the bypass round about.
2. It will tidy up the first part of track to the Fairy Pools making easier walking.
3. As a regularly used access, it will improve security for the area, including for neighbours to the church site.
4. Is essential to the development of the corner, which will enhance the western entrance to Kerikeri. Folk may well think of other advantages and are encouraged to do so.