

Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Welcome(Morag)

**Good Morning and welcome to worship here at MPN Church. Wherever you have joined us from a warm welcome this morning.**

**As you can see, I am not in the Church today, I thought I would take you on my walk today and show you some of the sights around Dalmellington.**

**Some people find God in the grand cathedrals and Churches around this country. For some it is a sacred place that they encounter God.**

**For me it is here up in the hills and the rivers and lochs. This view in the peace and quiet is one of the places since childhood where in the stillness God speaks. A sacred space for me.**

**I want to read a Psalm again to open our worship:**

### **Psalm 23**

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

<sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures,  
he leads me beside quiet waters,

<sup>3</sup> he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths  
for his name's sake.

<sup>4</sup>Even though I walk  
through the darkest valley,<sup>[a]</sup>

I will fear no evil,  
for you are with me;

your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.

<sup>5</sup>You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.

<sup>6</sup>Surely your goodness and love will follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord  
forever.

Let us worship God this morning as we sing our first hymn:

Song Come people of the risen king

Prayer

Story

Song King of Kings Majesty

Reading Revelation 2:18-29

Talk 2 (Morag)

In times when we haven't been able to plan our holidays or even go a short trip on a day away, it's been a good time to visit the Churches in Revelation. A bit like a holiday to Turkey the modern-day location of the Churches. We get to move through the countries and to take in the good and the bad news that the Churches have been told.

We have had time to think and reflect on going back to our first love of God, to remember that the word of God is central for our lives and the life of the Church. Today we head off on our travels round the Churches and today we are in Thyatira.

Thyatira, seated on the river Hermus, is (38 miles) from [Pergamos](#) and (32 miles) from Sardis. The city was located in the northern part of Lydia of [the Roman province of Asia](#).

Thyatira was a prosperous trading town that was an important location on the Roman road from Pergamos to Laodicea. The city hosted a major cult of [the pagan god Apollo](#) (son of Zeus). The city was famous for its dyeing and was a centre of the [indigo](#) trade.

It is to the Church in Thyayria that John is told to write. Again, the good news is that their love, faith, service and perseverance and they are doing more than they did at first. It seems that they are growing in all of these things and again a good community of faith it would appear to belong to.

But we are getting used to the Good news/bad news of all of these Churches.

The bad news for the Church at Thyatira is that they have let Jezebel who calls herself a prophetess mislead them in her teaching. She still holds to idols and practices of the past.

The Church is in spiritual danger and is called to repent and come back to God.

**Their sin is not that they themselves have followed these practices but that they have tolerated it and not dealt with those who have fallen into the false teachings.**

Today it is easy for us to think that we have no idols and no practices that are similar to those of this time. An Idol is something that we focus on love and revere.

**Before lockdown there were so many celebrities and idols for people to focus on. The internet gave us a glimpse into the lives of these so-called celebrities. Lives that were so vastly different to those who watched and wanted to be like them. Money, fame, the designer clothes and all the trappings being sold as what was important in this world. Folks used this a measure in life and compared and tried to be like this.**

Even the Church got caught up in this. Looking to see what others were doing and trying to do the same.

But our call is to be the people God called each one of us to be and that every person is needed with their gifts to form the community of God for their time and their place.

It's what the Church in Thyatira are being called to think through. What things do they tolerate that they should think about and need to review? And how do they relate to the world around them in a relevant way but keeping to the ways of their faith.

Another good thing for us to think about in our situation today.

**At this time in our history as communities of faith we have the opportunity to speak into this time. To look at what is relevant in faith and life. Who will be the prophets of our time.**

When this is over will we still watch celebrities and study their lives, or will we have a new narrative on what is important in this world.

***We hear:***

<sup>26-28</sup> ***“Here’s the reward I have for every conqueror, everyone who keeps at it, refusing to give up: You’ll rule the nations, your Shepherd-King rule as firm as an iron staff, their resistance fragile as clay pots. This was the gift my Father gave me; I pass it along to you – and with it, the Morning Star!*”**

**Jesus tells us that those who overcome and refuse to give up will have the Morning start and the world to rule over.**

**But it is how we will rule. Will we rule with the ways of the world or will we rule in the ways of God?**

**Walter Bruggeman in his book Reality, Grief, hope three urgent prophetic tasks says this:**

**“The dominate culture has, in its chosenness, failed to love neighbour and so has failed to regard the weak, poor, vulnerable as legitimate members of the community. The elite have manipulated the markets, paid low wages and managed the economy in their own interest to the detriment of others.”**

**Bruggerman is cautioning us on how we see ourselves as God’s people and that when we deal with others and that we treat them as God has asked us, to love our neighbours , as we love ourselves and as God loves us.**

**Jesus has left the church with the command to overcome in the world but to not be exclusive. The people of faith are to be the change in the world and to build the kingdom of God in the world around them.**

**It’s been a challenge to read about the Churches in Revelation at this time in our world. We can use this time to think about what kind of Church are we, what kind of Church will we be when we return. For there have been so many changes and we can’t go back. Every day is a school day and we need time to think through the things we have lost and our new reality. We can’t meet as the people of God Physically. But there have been plenty of encouragement for us in coming together online and over the phone. What things will we take with us I asked last week.**

You saw me out walking in the village, up on the hills near my house. In the stillness and the beauty of nature around me. For me a place to draw near to God. In this time when we are cut off for all that is familiar and the future seems so uncertain, I was reminded this week of the importance of community and being with people. That communities shape people and that it is in this time that new communities and new stories are being written. God speaks to us in these times and we share our story and God's story by all our interactions in this world.

The Church in Thyatira had been commended for doing more than they had at first, their love, faith, service and perseverance had grown, the one thing they had let creep in was tolerating things that were not good for those around them and they had the opportunity to come back to God.

**Hosea 12:6**

***“ But as for you, return to God,  
Hold fast to love and justice  
And wait continually for your God.”***

**Our challenge this week, to hold fast to God, to be faithful to our calling, not to anyone else's and to wait for God who will honour our call and be faithful to us.**

To God the Father  
God the Son  
God the Holy Spirit  
Amen

Song Good Good Father

Prayer

Blessing(Morag)

**May the peace of God which is beyond all understanding  
Guard your heart and your thoughts in Christ Jesus  
And the Blessing of God Almighty  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit  
Be with you and all those you love  
Now and forever more  
Amen.**