

New Kilpatrick

Sermon

29th October 2017

Psalm 46

Spirit... may you be our life-force... our wisdom... our inspiration... may you be the one who calls us from here... and sends us into the world... not with an idea of the answers... but with a sense of adventure... So be it... Amen

So 500 years almost to the day... Martin Luther pasted his 95 theses to the door of Wittenburg Castle church... He had done this the year before... with his 97 theses... but that sparked no interest... This time round... it made all the difference... and changed the very pillars of the western world...

Now... I'm no historian... I'm a geographer... I can name you countries... I even tell you where a lot of them are... plate tectonics... alluvial fans... urbanisation... no problem... but give me a date... and I'm lost... My daughter... on the other hand... loves history... So I don't think she is ours... Given her peculiar interest in history... I asked, "So tell me about the reformation... What happened?"...

'You'll need to wait till January... We haven't covered that topic yet...'

'But the reformation anniversary is this weekend...'

Pause...

'Dad... Google it!'... Which was a subtly insightful answer... not that she knew it... because one of the reasons the reformation spread... was because of a new social media technology called printing... and Wittenburg had a press... that enabled pamphlets to be quickly reproduced and sent everywhere...

Today we have a different but again new social media technology... we call it the internet... and can create movements and heroes equally as fast... all there ready to shape a new reformation...

And that perhaps isn't as far fetched as it might sound... In a world so... uncertain of who it is... where our traditional understandings and frameworks have been removed by

populism... our institutions... including the church... are no longer universally trusted... it all sounds quite similar to 500 years ago... Perhaps the prophets and commentators are right... and we are standing on the edge of a new paradigm...

But is that not where we naturally stand as God's People... always between Egypt and Canaan... between graveyard and empty tomb... between cross and resurrection... We are naturally always between times... always on the edge of a new paradigm...

But that isn't always how we live... The Church seems immovable at times...

But every time we come to the table here... surely paradigms shift... That is what bread and wine does... or is meant to do... A reformation idea was to serve bread and wine far more often than was being done... which was only once a year... not the weekly mass as now... Mass was served at Easter and only at Easter... the reformers idea was to share four times a year... Knox even considered it every week...

One of the reasons being... that here... in this bread and wine... the world begins again... This is the moment of grace... of forgiveness... of renewal... of death and resurrection... This symbol of Jesus body broken and blood spilled... is a new starting point... framework... paradigm... every time...

And the reformers belief was we shape our communities round the bread and wine... that we... reform our lives together shaped by the feast...

What might that kind of community be like... a bread and wine community?...

Well perhaps a community shaped round a meal to be shared as Jesus shared it... with tax collectors and sinners... a bread and wine community would create a more inclusive... less membership driven community... where people belonged even if they didn't believe... Speak to Zacchaeus and the meal he had with Jesus about that... though we've gone and turned it into a membership privilege...

Perhaps a bread and wine community... would focus more on the needs of others... their hunger... their thirst... before worrying about whether the bread was the real presence... or a symbol... think of Jairus' daughter and the small meal he had there or Jesus eating

with pharisees... though we often focus on the theology that divides us rather than feeds us...

Perhaps a bread and wine community... would share more with its neighbour... ready to look outward to those who seek a place to belong... seeing this bread and wine as a mission opportunity... a place of compassion of grace and love... think of the Syro-Phonician woman and her daughter and the crumbs at the table... though we've found ways to be exclusive and fence the table in the past...

If we begin with the bread and wine every time we do community... and let this renew us... reform us... and focus us... then we might be a differently kind of community... in this new paradigm the western world faces...

More outward looking... more inclusive... shaped round the needs of others... creating a place to meet our neighbours... with imagination and stories to engage folk... it sounds awfully like the original version of the gospel... Zacchaeus... Jairus' daughter... Syro-Phonician woman all might agree... after their meal experiences with Jesus...

Which is interesting... because these are the important themes we have discovered over the last year... and are exploring as we continue to ever reform ourselves... from consultations to conversations with others... more outward looking... more meeting places for all... sense of belonging... working with our neighbours... Our whole consultation and purpose is all there in the bread and wine...

We've spent a long time getting to this moment... 500 years to some counts... yet there it is... right in front of us... each time we eat... we open up a new paradigm... a new opportunity... to re-form ourselves and our community...

So let us begin here again... shape our community and our relationships with our neighbours... The geography and landscape always changes... and history doesn't need to repeat itself... This bread and wine... offers a new paradigm each time we eat... a reforming into a meeting place... a belonging place... loving place... for neighbour, parish and all...