

From the Pastor

Church family,

I hope some of you have found the time to walk and pray. We're doing this in the hope that God might speak to us, individually and collectively, in this season of Lent.

What I'd love to do next is create a space where we can share our experiences and discern together. And so this Wednesday evening, 7.30pm-8.30pm, on the church zoom link, we'll gather; and those who are willing to do so can share and reflect with others about what God might have revealed to us during our times of prayer-walking.

I'll take time to share also. Corporate listening has been part of the church since its inception (Acts 2:1, Acts 4:31, Acts 11:18, 1 Cor 14:27-28) and we want to use this time to ensure as best we can this next season of our church is what God wants for us and for our community:

"Where there is no vision, the people perish." – Proverbs 29:18 (KJV)

On the subject of walking, if anyone would like to join me for one I'd love that! I could come to you and we would remain compliant with current restrictions. At the moment one-to-one walking outdoors is permissible but when we are able I'd love to walk and meet with family groups too. Contact me if you would like to arrange this – my number and email address can be found on this update sheet.

Our Annual General Meeting will take place after church on Sunday 14th March;



we will begin at approximately 12noon. This year's meeting will take place online, which I'm sure comes as no surprise to you, and we will take time to hear and scrutinise reports as well as make some important decisions about the leadership and direction of the church. It's an important part of the way we exist as a church with accountability, transparency and democracy. However, at the centre of it all we want there to be prayer – please be in prayer ahead of this. The reports will be circulated next week as well as details of how to join. Remember, if you are a church member you have a vote in any decisions needing to be made, but everyone is welcome to attend. There will be opportunities to join the membership of the church later in the year.

We're still looking for volunteers to feature in our revival of the 'Brooklands Favourites' series. A short section of you detailing your favourite worship song and why. Speak to me or Mark Bolton if you want to participate.

Peace,

Mick

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Daily Reading and Prayer Guide

Date	Reading	Pray for
Monday 1 March	Mark chapter 6 verses 7 to 29	Arthur Basnett and family
Tuesday 2 March	Mark chapter 6 verses 30 to 56	Theresa Baker and family
Wednesday 3 March	Mark chapter 7 verses 1 to 30	Val Batty and family
Thursday 4 March	Mark 7:31 to Mark 8:18	John and Ann Beattie and family
Friday 5 March	Mark 8:14 to Mark 9:1	Vivienne Best and family
Saturday 6 March	Catch up	Mark, Joanne and Tom Bolton
Sunday 7 March	Mark chapter 9 verses 2 to 29	Audrey Bolton and family

Special Prayer Requests

- * We continue to pray for Keith and Brenda at this time. Keith remains seriously ill in hospital, and Brenda continues to support him.
- * Pray for Isobel, who has had further investigations at hospital and is awaiting the outcome.
- * We pray for students at NTC who worship with us: Katie (and Scott), Huw, Lucy, Vivienne, David and Cameron.
- * Continue to pray for Jon F
- * Remember to pray for healing for John B, and for Ann



Sermon Notes

Series: Encounters on the Road to the Cross (2)

Luke 14:15-24

It's been said of Luke's Gospel that throughout it, Jesus is either going to a meal, at a meal, or coming from a meal. Maybe that's why it's one of my favourite books of the Bible! Of all the things I've missed over this last year, I reckon right at the top of the list would have to be the ability to gather around a table with other people and enjoy food, conversation, stories, laughter...

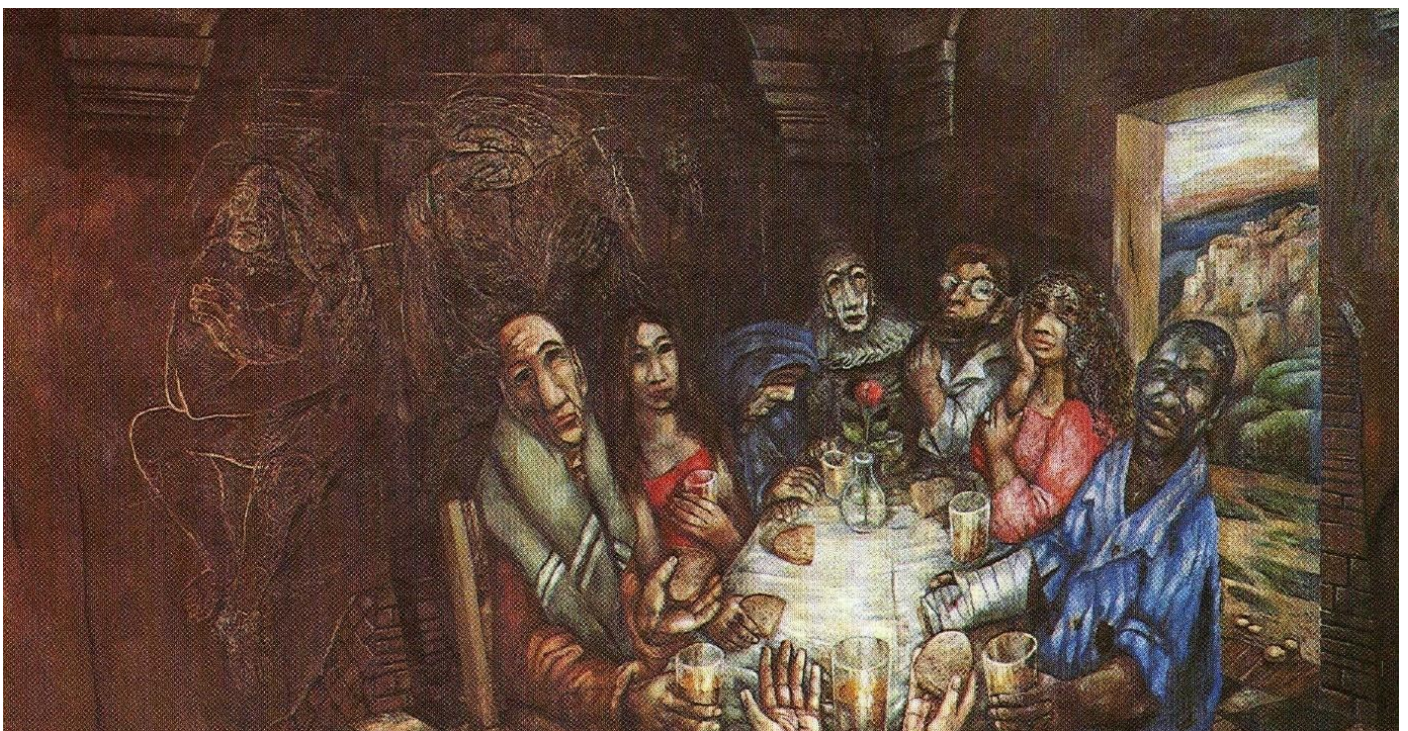
But it's not just in Luke's Gospel that this theme of meal sharing appears. For me it's been one of these things that once I begin to notice it in the Scriptures I start seeing it everywhere. From David's 'table in the presence of my enemies' to the feeding of the 5000; from the first Passover meal to Jesus instituting of the sacrament of communion. **The theme of table has real prominence in the Bible.**

And in today's passage we have Jesus using the image to give us a glorious picture of heaven. **'Heaven will be like this great banquet,'** he says. And he's using this picture to continue

his message that we reflected on last week – the Good news of the Kingdom of God is this: The outsiders are now to be welcomed in!

The image below is a favourite of mine. A copy of it hangs in my office. It's by a Jesuit artist from Germany by the name of **Sieger Koder** and it is titled, **'All are Welcome.'** I think it captures so much of the truth of Jesus parable of the great banquet – probably better than I could ever preach (no 'Amen' to that, please).

I wonder what you see when you look at it? Honestly, the reason I was drawn to it in the first place was because at first glance it almost seems ugly, right? The features of those sitting around the table have been accentuated to the point where they seem grotesque even. But then when the time was taken for me to understand what the painter was trying to communicate I now believe it's one of the most beautiful images I know.



BrooklandsChurch
of the Nazarene



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At Brooklands, we are big enough to be part of a world-wide denomination, yet small enough to invite you to make our church your home. Please visit our website and contact us if you would like to get in touch or need more information on any of our events.

During the Coronavirus pandemic, we are holding weekly services on our YouTube channel, starting at 10:30 am each Sunday.

We look forward to welcoming you to our fellowship!

Manchester Brooklands Church of the Nazarene, Registered Charity No: 1159881

The picture is shown from the perspective of Jesus. We know this because there are what looks like wounds on his hands and he also seems to be **breaking bread with them**. The Eucharist, perhaps? And then when we go around the table starting with the person on Jesus' right we can understand a little more about who some of these people are and who they might represent. Firstly we have an **immigrant** who looks like he has been injured in some way. Secondly we have a **wealthy woman** who, if you look very closely, seems to be wearing a veil, indicating some kind of grief. Next we have an intelligent **physician**, striking a classic 'thinking' pose. After him we have a **clown** in full costume with a sombre expression. Next to the clown we have a **beggar**, who is so downcast that they cannot lift their head from the table. Continuing round we have the scarlet lips of a **prostitute**, and finally a **Jewish man** identified with his prayer shawl.

In many ways it's a ragtag bunch akin to the guests in Jesus' parable who have been ushered in from the highways and byways as the message of the Gospel goes out: **All are welcome!** It's beautiful, right?

But there's more! And you may need to look very closely for this detail. If you notice the detail on the wall to the left of the table you'll see that there's an etching. It portrays two people embracing and another turned away. It's actually a depiction of the **parable of the prodigal son** (next week's sermon, incidentally). And if you look at the way it has been positioned in relation to the table it shows that the embracing father and son are part of the gathering around the table, but the son who turns away is separate. And if we apply the message of 'All are Welcome,' here is what we find: All are welcome! All are invited in! **And the only ones who to be excluded are the ones who exclude themselves...**