

Knox Presbyterian Church Service

August 31 2025

Interim Minister: The Rev. Daniel Martinez

Minister: The Rev. Harold McNabb

Music: Carolyn Hoekstra

Elder: Lorraine Whiting

Reader: Fiona Gow

Welcome/Announcements/Land Acknowledgement - Unison (Worship Elder)

As followers of Jesus, we are compelled to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God. It is our love of God and neighbour that leads us to acknowledge that we gather with gratitude on the traditional and unceded Coast Salish Territory of Lkwungen people. We pray that past and present injustices can be reconciled as we commit ourselves again to just and respectful relationships.

Come, now is the time for worship

Call to Worship - Responsive

Sing aloud to God who is our strength!

Raise a shout of joy to the God of all generations!

For our God feeds us with the finest wheat;

with honey from the rock God will satisfy.

Let us worship the Lord our God,

For God has done great things for us, and so we bring God praise.

412 - Come, let us sing to the Lord, our song

Gathering Prayer

God of all generations, you are the Source of all life and the strength of our lives. You know us through and through. In Jesus Christ, you entered our lives and showed us how to live with hope and generosity. Through the Holy Spirit, you nourish us each day to inspire acts of hospitality and kindness to those we meet. As we worship you, fill us with your living water to refresh our faith, and make us a blessing to others as we serve you in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Welcoming God, we confess we too often fall short of the kindness and compassion we meet in Jesus. You have welcomed us like guests to a banquet, yet we find it hard to welcome a stranger in church. You have shown us what matters most in life, but we are distracted by worries, busy with things that really do not matter. Forgive us, O God. Teach us to honour you and those we meet in all we do and say, for the sake of Christ, our Lord, who gave us this prayer:

The Lord's Prayer - Unison

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen

□ Assurance of Pardon

While it is true that we have sinned and fallen short of God's hope for us, it is a greater truth that we are forgiven through God's amazing love. To all who humbly seek the mercy of God I say, in Jesus Christ our sin is forgiven. So be at peace with God, with yourself, and with one another.

434 - For the beauty of the earth

□ Prayer for Understanding - Unison (Worship Reader)

O God, still in us the worries of the world to listen for your wisdom spoken by prophets, poets, and apostles. Move in us and among us by your Spirit so that in their words, we meet your Living Word, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Scripture

Psalm 112 [responsive/displayed]

Praise the LORD!

**Happy are those who fear the LORD,
who greatly delight in his commandments.**

² Their descendants will be mighty in the land;
the generation of the upright will be blessed.

³ Wealth and riches are in their houses,
and their righteousness endures forever.

⁴ They rise in the darkness as a light for the upright;
they are gracious, merciful, and righteous.

⁵ It is well with those who deal generously and lend,
who conduct their affairs with justice.

⁶ For the righteous will never be moved;
they will be remembered forever.

⁷ They are not afraid of evil tidings;
their hearts are firm, secure in the LORD.

⁸ Their hearts are steady; they will not be afraid;
in the end they will look in triumph on their foes.

Luke 14:1, 7-14 (NT 77)

On one occasion when Jesus^[a] was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the Sabbath, they were watching him closely.

⁷ When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable. ⁸ "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host, ⁹ and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, 'Give this person your place,' and then in

disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. ¹⁰ But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. ¹¹ For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

¹² He said also to the one who had invited him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers and sisters or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. ¹³ But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. ¹⁴ And you will be blessed because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

Response:

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Sermon: Lessons in Humility

Jesus is invited on a sabbath to dine at the home of a prominent Pharisee.

Chapter 13 takes place in Jerusalem, but the exact location of the action in this chapter is unclear, which isn't particularly important in any case.

And we don't know which of Jesus' disciples is with him. It's doubtful they are all there. After all, who would invite thirteen extra guests for dinner? So, we just don't know who is recounting the event. Again, it doesn't really matter. I especially like Luke's gospel because of all the personal details he typically includes, like names and places. Still, this event has almost none of those kinds of details.

I want to focus on verses 7 to 11, in this passage about how Jesus responds to the guests scrambling for the seats considered most prestigious.

Banquets were status showcases: In Greco-Roman society, meals weren't just about food - they were public displays of social hierarchy. Guests competed for the most prestigious seats, and seating arrangements reflected one's rank.

Jesus challenges this norm: By telling guests to choose the lowest seat, He flips the cultural script. Instead of climbing the social ladder, He promotes humility—a virtue rarely admired in Roman culture. He could have said, "You pride yourself on being such pious followers of the law, but look how far you have fallen from Moses and the prophets. You behave like the Gentiles."

He didn't say that to the Pharisees and guests, but he said something very close to that when his disciples argued over who would get the best places in the kingdom. He said, "That's how Gentiles behave, but you have a greater standard of being servants of one another."

Humility was not a Roman virtue. It was equated with weakness.

Something that shouts to me is to look at this vignette from one step back.

Before focusing on who said or did this or that, consider the snapshot version.

What do you see?

A household scene. It is the home of a prominent religious leader. Probably a well-to-do person.

If you were Rembrandt, how would you paint it? Or how about Norman Rockwell?

Imagine the guests on their cushions reclining at a low table, elbowing each other to get to the best place next to the host. Someone obviously feeling insulted by their seating position...how would you paint him?

And Jesus? Where is Jesus in the mix? After all, it seems he is the person they all came to see.

Is this a comedy or tragedy?

This is a banquet to host the King of Kings, Lord of Lords. And do any of them even have a clue as to who he is? What would change if they knew?

Luke tells us that Jesus heals a man who may have been brought in to test Jesus, or someone who came in on his own. That was permitted by the way. Maybe he heard Jesus was there and came for mercy and healing.

Jesus heals him, and still they seem as unseeing as when they all first entered the house. That blows my mind. Healing a man! They are blind to it. This is no comedy in the Greek sense. This is a tragedy.

To have the author of life and eternity within touching distance and to totally miss the opportunity is the ultimate tragedy.

When Jesus gives them his advice on where to sit, he's not giving a lesson on table etiquette. He's showing them how to position themselves not for status, but for their own eternal well-being. Jesus is urging his listeners to rethink what righteousness and reward truly mean.

In God's economy, we aren't rewarded because of our status, but as often as not, despite our total lack of status.

For example, Zaccheus was an outcast, but Jesus chose his home to visit and bring him grace.

Mary Magdalene was utterly outcast and without Jesus' love; she had nothing, but she is the one who meets him first after his resurrection.

In the painting of the banquet you're working on in your imagination, how about doing something Rembrandt was fond of doing. He often painted himself into the picture.

So let's paint ourselves into the picture. Here's what I suggest it look like: paint Jesus looking toward you. He was the guest of honor, so I suppose like in DaVinci's The Last Supper, he's somewhere in the center. But not in chairs in a straight line. The banquet would have been shaped in "U" with Jesus at the head.

Where are you?

How about at the end of the chain, barely having room on the cushion.

Or maybe just standing in the doorway, unsure if you should enter.

But you can tell Jesus sees you.

What are you doing?

The answer totally changes depending on whether you're fighting for better status, or whether you're just happy to be there in the first place.

You probably didn't get an invitation because you're not on the who's who list of religious big shots.

So you're likely one of the folks who just came in off the street.

And Jesus sees you.

Jesus sees you and knows you and loves you.

Paint that picture in your mind and hold onto it when you need it.

When you feel like no one knows or cares what you think, or feel or need.

Jesus sees you and knows you and loves you.

What do you do with that?

Listen to what Jesus is saying. Forget about your status or who gets the best seat.

Be like a man called Marty in a book, "The Richest Man in Town"

Marty was a humble check out clerk in a Walmart before self checkout.

He lived in a double-wide trailer but was the richest man in town because of how he paid attention to everyone else.

The author of the book, V.J. Smith visited Mary's store and saw long line-ups at Marty's register even when other check outs were open. People just wanted to spend a few moments with Marty because he didn't just greet them and give them a smile. He knew them by name, mostly and shook their hand and thanked them for coming to Walmart. And then he engaged them in conversation about their life and what was going on with them just then.

People love to be seen and noticed. Even by Marty who treated everyone as special because, I suppose to him they were.

My late brother passed on a piece of wisdom I will not forget. I was much younger, and well you remember what that's like.

I don't remember the circumstance, but he said to me, "you'll be a lot less worried about what people think of you when you realize how seldom they actually do."

How true. I've noticed for example that most people want to be heard. Very few people want to hear about me, but desperately want me or you to listen to them.

Why be annoyed? Just listen to them and show them they are important to you.

Paul says it best when he wrote, preferring one another.

Be a Marty. Forget about your status, and be aware of others, especially the one who seems to be left out. Walk across the room and make connections. I think that's totally in line with what Jesus was saying.

229 - Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love

Invitation to the Offering

On this Labour Day weekend, we offer to God the fruit of our labour to support the redeeming work God has begun in the world. Give in hope and in trust that God will accomplish more than we can ask or imagine through our gifts.

306 - Praise God from whom all blessings flow

Prayer of Dedication - Unison

O God, bless the gifts we bring today, as well as the time, talent, and concern we will offer you this week. We trust that, through the power of your Spirit, these gifts will accomplish more than we can ask or imagine, for Christ's sake. Amen.

Pastoral Prayers

God of all times and all people, on this Labour Day weekend, we thank you for all the skill and talent with which you bless your people. Today we pray for all those who labour in difficult situations: We pray for those who cannot labour: for those who are unemployed or underemployed; for those who have become injured on the job or too sick to keep working; for

those who are denied the opportunity to earn a living because of war or discrimination. God, in your mercy hear our prayer. Lord, we constantly think of the people of Gaza and Ukraine and Sudan and the multitude of places on our globe where a nice long weekend seems like an impossible dream. Help them, Lord. Help us to help them. We hardly know how and what we do seems never enough. Lord, hear your people's prayers and the prayers of the forgotten one who cry out for mercy and justice. We pray in Jesus' name, hear our prayers, O Lord.

625 - Seek ye first

Blessing

May God the Father prepare your journey, Jesus the Son guide your footsteps, The Spirit of Life strengthen your body, The Three in One watch over you, on every road that you may follow. Amen. Go in peace

622 - Go now in peace