



The Central Norfolk Methodist Circuit

Sunday 2nd November 2025: 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Theme for today is "Good manners" Prepared by Rev Derek Grimshaw

Opening Words:

Into your presence we come, living, loving Lord, Into this time of worship.

Help me, help each of us, to notice your presence, over the next few minutes, and throughout our whole lives.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

Hymn 628 – Faithful one, so unchanging <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HROSwkRwpPI>

Faithful one, so unchanging
Ageless one, you are my rock of peace
Lord of all I depend on you
I call out to you, again and again
I call out to you, again and again
You are my rock in times of trouble
You lift me up when I fall down
All through the storm
Your love is, the anchor
My hope is in You alone

Opening Prayer

Almighty One, we gather to praise you with dancing and singing and glad hearts.

Glory be to you, the Ancient of Days, who is bigger than nations and kingdoms, yet knows and loves each one of us intimately.

We sing this song of praise to you. We gather with thankful hearts, eager to acknowledge the blessings you have poured out to us and grateful to celebrate those who have been good and faithful servants.

Loving God, we ask that you soften our hearts, quiet our minds and ready our eyes to be enlightened once again to know the riches of your glorious inheritance. Let us come to you as whole people, laying our sins at your feet, as we prepare to worship and know you.

Bless us and this holy place as we gather in your wonderful name. Amen.

Scripture Readings: Isaiah 1: 10-18 Luke 19: 1-10

Reflection:

As a child my parents taught me right from wrong, good manners and to respect others. I have attended Church for as long as I can remember and believe that through family life and Church life, I grew up with what I have always believed was a fine moral code. There are times when as an adult in the twenty-first century I feel that there has been a total breakdown in good manners.

GOOD MANNERS



Hymn 446 – I will offer up my life

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihUko9>

M6dpA

I will offer up my life in spirit and truth
Pouring out the oil of love, as my worship to you
In surrender I must give my every part
Lord, receive this sacrifice of a broken heart

*Jesus, what can I give, what can I bring
To so faithful a Friend, to so loving a King?
Savior, what can be said, what can be sung
As a praise of Your name for the things You have done?*

*Oh, my words could not tell, not even in part
Of the debt of love that is owed by this thankful heart*

You deserve my every breath, for You've paid the great cost
Giving up your life to death, even death on the cross
You took all my shame away, there defeated my sin
Open up the gates of heaven and have beckoned me in.

- My parents taught me not to walk in front of other people, yet almost every day, people walk right across my path and don't bat an eyelid.
- I sit patiently in my car giving way to a fellow driver, who really ought to be giving way to me, and they don't even have the decency to thank me.
- I stand in the queue with other shoppers at the checkout waiting patiently for my turn to come, the supervisor opens another till and the person at the back of the queue makes a dash, rather than waiting for the person who has waited the longest to take their turn.

I despair! And as I read these words from the prophet Isaiah I smile as I think of God being offered all kinds of sacrifices as though; by doing this kind of thing people are finding favour with God. The problem is that they are just providing lip service and then living the same kind of life they used to do. A huge part of my ministry is about trying to make the world a better place and there is little point in me preaching on a Sunday, then living a life that doesn't measure up for the rest of the week.

I have known the story of Zacchaeus since being a little boy in Sunday school in the early 1960's and over the years I have tried to preach in fresh, dynamic and creative ways on this passage. **What do we know about Zacchaeus?**

- **He was little.** I have come across a lot of people over years who are short in stature and people can be as cruel to small people as they can be to people who are carrying more weight and I guess that calling somebody "titch" would hurt as much as calling somebody "fatty" or "tubby" I guess that over the years Zacchaeus had become used to being shoved to the back, being overlooked by those who saw themselves as being "normal" whatever that means.
- **He was a tax collector.** In the time of Jesus simply being a tax collector would render him an outcast. Apart from Zacchaeus taking money that people had earned a bit like the Tax office today, the general assumption was that he was skimming money off the top for himself, meaning that he was perhaps very wealthy.

We have possibly learned all of this time and again through our lives, but what strikes me is the overwhelming response of Zacchaeus's generosity after meeting Christ.

- He doesn't give just 10% of his wealth to the poor, he is offering 50%
- He isn't just paying back any money that he has defrauded people of, even with a bit of interest, he is giving back four times as much.
- This is a significant amount of his wealth and may well render him a life of poverty.
- Yet reading the last couple of verses, his reward is far greater than the value of his possessions. His reward is in heaven.

Maybe on reflection, I shouldn't get all uppity when somebody doesn't show me the courtesy to treat me the way I would like to be treated. Maybe what is important is more important is that I behave in a respectful manner, honouring the standards that my parents drilled into me and the way that I believe God wants me to react with my brothers and sister, whoever they might be.

Prayers of intercession

Nothing is new and everything is new, **Keep us on the tightrope of hope.**

We remember those people who have travelled before us...

Silence

Nothing is new and everything is new, **Keep us on the tightrope of hope.**

We remember those who are experiencing poverty, marginalization, war and injustice...

Silence

Nothing is new and everything is new, **Keep us on the tightrope of hope.**

We remember those called to rule and to govern...

Silence

Nothing is new and everything is new, **Keep us on the tightrope of hope.**

We remember the earth we travel on, the air we breathe, and the non-human creatures we live alongside...

Silence

Nothing is new and everything is new, **Keep us on the tightrope of hope.**

We remember our own needs and those of the people we care about...

Silence

Nothing is new and everything is new, **Keep us on the tightrope of hope. Amen.**

The Lord's prayer

Hymn 397 – The Spirit lives to set us free <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8CumpuwbWv4>

The Spirit lives to set us free,
walk, walk in the light.
he binds us all in unity,
Walk, walk in the light.

*Walk in the light,
Walk in the light,
Walk in the light,
Walk in the light of the Lord.*

Jesus promised life to all,
walk, walk in the light;
the dead were wakened by his call,
walk, walk in the light.

He died in pain on Calvary,
walk, walk in the light.
to save the lost like you and me,
walk, walk in the light.

We know his death was not the end,
walk, walk in the light.
he gave his Spirit to be our friend,
walk, walk in the light.

By Jesus' love our wounds are healed,
walk, walk in the light.
the father's kindness is revealed
walk, walk in the light.

The Spirit lives in you and me,
walk, walk in the light.
His light will shine for all to see,
walk, walk in the light.

Damian Lundy (1944-1996)

Closing Blessing

God of all grace,
Today and this week,
May your presence be known to us,
Your love close to us,
Your hope in our hearts,
Your grace in our conversations.
We go, to find you, already ahead of us
Amen.