

Sermon

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West Kirk of Calder & Polbeth Harwood

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WHY? Service

Words of welcome and intimations

Today we have a special family service.

The children have been asking me why we do certain things in the church, and then I quickly realized that lots of adults don't know either – because the answer to this question was: Because we've always done it!!

But actually, there is a reason behind every single thing that happens in church on a Sunday, so today I will explain all these reasons to you.

A friend of mine told last week that her 14 year old son loves baked beans. He always buys these tins with the wee lever at the top that just pulls open. But for some reason last week he bought a tin that didn't have that lever on, and he then phoned her at work, asking: "Mum, how do you use a tin opener?"

We laughed at that, because we all have been using tin openers for such a long time, we don't think about the quite complex skill that is involved in using this tool!

But how *would* he know? He's never used one before!

So – to make sure you all know exactly why we do what we do on a Sunday, we have today's service!

1. What happens as people arrive at the church?

- Welcomed at the door by elders on duty.
- Everybody and anybody is welcome in the house of God, and by welcoming people at the door, we make sure that they know that!
- If someone is here for the very first time – elder can explain to them how we do things here on a Sunday.

2. Why does the Bible get carried into the church before the service starts?

- To help us remember that the Word of God stands central to everything we do in church on a Sunday.
- Long ago, before the Reformation, people started focussing on lots of different things in the church, and the word of God became less and less important – and that resulted in wars taking place in the name of faith.
- We learn from mistakes made in the past, so every Sunday we bring the Bible in to remind us that everything we do here is about the Word of God.
- We also have a lit candle in church, indicating that Jesus is the light of the World, and we believe that through his Spirit God is here with us.

3. Why does the minister wear robes and a collar?

- The collar is like my uniform.
- When you go to hospital, and you need to speak to a nurse, it's easy to see who to go to, because she'll have a uniform on that distinguishes her as a nurse. The same is true for fireman, policeman, and so on.
- There's lot of symbolism behind this: Tight around the neck – indicate yoke, because I am working for God; white – to indicate that what I say when I speak on behalf of God has to be pure.

- I need to prepare well and ask God to speak through me, because I can't get up on that pulpit and say "this is the word of the Lord", if it's just something I thought up myself!
- But why this robe?
- In Old Testament times the prophets told the people what God wanted them to do, and a prophet always wore a mantle. This "mantle" was replaced by an academic robe as a symbol that a minister went to university to gain the knowledge needed to preach the Word of God.

4. Why do we have the intimations (announcements) at the beginning of the service?

- Practical reason – so everybody is still in the church to hear it.
- So that when we leave the last thing we hear is the word of God, and not all the things we need to remember to do this week!

Worshipping God Together

5. Why does the service always follow the same pattern?

- I plan very carefully what we do every Sunday. We don't just sing random songs – every single thing that happens in a service has to do with the theme for that specific Sunday.
- Our service is structured like a dialog between us and God.
- If I talk to someone, they listen, and then talk. (Illustrate this.)
- This is the same. On behalf of God, I say something, and then as a congregation, we say something back. I'll show you what I mean as we go along.

6. What is a "call to worship"?

- It's like God saying "hello" to us! It's a few words indicating that we are meeting here in the name of God.

Call to Worship

Minister: Let us praise the name of the Lord,

All: for he called us here today.

Minister: Lead us where we need to go, Jesus,

All: and help us to follow you.

7. Why do we sing hymns?

It's an easy way for all of us to together answer God at the same time – if we sing together!

It's also a celebration! Like the QUEEN'S birthday celebrations this weekend – everybody all over Britain gets together and celebrate (that's why we have our red, white and blue ribbons today). It's bonds us as a nation.

We are brothers and sisters in faith – communion of believers – on a Sunday we get together to bond and grow closer to each other.

8. Please explain the purpose of the first hymn.

The 1st hymn is always a song of praise.

We thank God for welcoming us and that we can be here to listen to his word.

CH4 Hymn 448

Lord, the light of your love is shining

9. What is the 1st prayer about?

It's a prayer in which we praise God, because we're so happy to be here, and also a prayer in which we ask him to help us to listen and to forgive us for the mistakes we've made this past week.

Opening Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Children's Talk

Today the youngsters share what they have been learning at Sunday Club/JAM Club about the M&Ms of the Bible: Jesus' Magical Miracles!

11. Please explain the purpose of the children's hymn.

It's the kids' response to what they have just learned from God – thank you for the message and we will try our best to go do it!

CH4 Hymn 204

I am the church, you are the church

12. Can you please explain the Bible readings to us?

- Word of God.
- The passage we read will be explained and elaborated on in the sermon.

Word of God

Reflecting on God's Word

Reading: Luke, chapter 18, vv 35 - 43 (page 1053 of bible)

Luke 18:35-43 (Child friendly translation)

Jesus was walking on the road to Jericho. Many people were with Him. When he was almost at Jericho, His group passed by a man who was blind. The man was sitting by the road, begging for money and food.

The blind man asked the people near him why a crowd was passing them. The people said that Jesus from Nazareth was coming.

Right away, the blind man started shouting, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

The people around the blind man told him to be quiet, but he shouted louder, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

When Jesus got closer, He stopped. He asked that the blind man be brought to

Him. When the man got to Jesus, Jesus asked, “What would you like me to do for you?”

The blind man answered, “Lord, I want to see!” Jesus said, “Receive your sight. Because you believed in Me, you are well.”

Right away, the man could see! He followed Jesus, praising God. All the people who saw it also praised God!

13. Another hymn?!

Our response to the word of God – will enforce the words we have just heard.

JP Hymn 292 Wide, wide as the ocean

14. What is a sermon? Why do you go up onto the pulpit to deliver the sermon?

- Explanation of the word of God – what He wants to say to us today.
- Pulpit – special area for proclaiming the word of God.
- On my way up to the pulpit I always say a wee prayer asking God to help me to say what He wants me to say.

Short message

What happened in our Bible story?

Jesus was walking along the road. There were lots of people with him, so it was quite noisy. A blind man sat next to the road. When he heard the noise, he asked what was going on, because he couldn't see. Somebody told him that Jesus was walking by.

And you know what that blind man did? He shouted at Jesus to come to him! Now I know that today we have very good manners, and we know that we are not allowed to shout at anybody, but that blind man was so excited to meet Jesus, that he forgot his manners and decided to do *everything* in his power to meet Jesus.

We need to remember that the Bible was written a very long time ago, and things worked differently in those days.

They didn't know much about science and medicine, and they couldn't understand why some people were healthy and others not. So they came to the conclusion that if something was wrong with you, that it was because you did something wrong; Which meant that the blind man must have done something really bad not to be able to see.

Well, today we know it doesn't work like that, don't we? Jesus knew that too, and he wanted to teach all the people around him that God loves everybody.

The reason why the blind man had to shout, was because he wasn't allowed to go near Jesus. Because of their beliefs, the people thought he was bad and they actually believed that 'badness' was contagious. So he needed to be kept as far away from Jesus as possible!

But Jesus wasn't scared to go near him.

Although this man couldn't see, he believed with all his heart that Jesus could make him better. And because he believed that, Jesus did. Jesus went to him and took his blindness away.

He was so happy that he could see again! And he praised God and followed Jesus.

This story teaches us an important lesson. Not only that Jesus can do anything, but also that it is important to follow Jesus.

Close your eyes for a moment. Can you imagine how hard it must be to not be able to see a single thing? Ever? We are so fortunate that we can all see well.

And because of that, we should make the most of our sight.

The blind man couldn't even see Jesus or anything God made on earth or anything Jesus did, and still he believed in him.

We *can* see everything God made, we can see how much he loves us. If a blind man knew these things and knew to praise God for it, how much more important is it for us to praise God?!

We get grumpy so easily, when we don't get what we want or if things don't work out the way we planned. But if we only focus on the things that make us unhappy, we are no different from a blind person – because if we only see our problems, we have restricted vision, then we can't see all the good things in our lives as well.

So let's use our eyes well. Let's look around us all the time and make sure that we see everything, all the special and amazing things that God give us and show us. And also all the opportunities God give us to make this world a better place.

Because if we do this, we will be like the blind man in the story – no matter what goes wrong, we will be certain of the fact that God is bigger than our problems and that he can do anything.

Let's see Jesus in our lives every single day – because he IS there!

Amen

15. Why do people give money?

- God gives us so much – we give a little money to say thank you for that!
- Used to keep the church standing and to take care of people who need it (because we Christians should take care of one another).

Responding to God's Word

Our **offerings** are given for the ministry and mission of the church, while the organist plays a hymn.

16. What is the 2nd prayer about?

Here we pray for others and ask God for specific things.

Prayer

Loving Father

Thank you for talking to us today here in church.

Help us to go home and live like your children.

Please use these pennies we have given today

To make the world a better place.

There are lots of people in this world that need to be looked after,

please show them your love

and help us to care for those who are in need, sick, lonely, or unhappy.

Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Amen

17. Does the last hymn mean anything special?

- Reinforces the message we just heard.
- We'll go do what God wants us to do!

CH4 Hymn 533 Will you come and follow me

18. What is the blessing/benediction?

- It's like God saying "goodbye" to us!
- Reminder that God promises to be with us until next Sunday when we meet again.
- God is not only here in his church, he goes everywhere with us.

19. Why do we sing "Amen" after the blessing?

"Amen" means "this is true". We are all saying together that we believe God will take care of us through the week.

Blessing

Receive the blessing of the Lord and go in peace:

And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you all and with all whom you love. This day and forever more.

Sung threefold Amen

20. Why does the Bible get carried out at the end of the service?

Indicate that it is the end of the service.

21. Why do you stand at the church door at the end of the service?

- So I can see everybody and wish them a good week.
- I want to know that everybody is okay; if someone needs a wee visit or want me to remember something please write it down on a POST-IT note!

22. What happens after the service?

Everybody is invited to the Hall/Café area for coffee/tea and fellowship – spending time together with fellow believers. Can't get to know each other during the service – so come along!

We need to know and trust each other before we can truly support one another!!

Wee surprise today, M&Ms!!