

Time for God – Take 2

Purpose: To assist the congregation with further reflection on the theme of the Sunday service and in particular with the Congregational Bible passage.

Week beginning Sunday 18 June 2017

A Valued Flock

Pray Pray that we would appreciate the overwhelming care that God has for us and be willing to share that with others, especially with those who are apt to be forgotten about by society. Give thanks that God really does care.

Read Read the passage (preferably in an easy to understand version). Matthew 10: 24-33.

Background Jesus speaks in the context of temple sacrifice. Even in those days everything had a price. But it is fair to say that sparrows were not exactly treasured. I suspect (though am not certain) that our phrase “two a penny” originates from these words of Jesus. We use that phrase to indicate when something is so common and widely available. Jesus’ point was that human beings (even the most neglected and seemingly insignificant) are valued by God. He cares.

Possible questions/points to consider

1. It has been said that everything and everyone has their price. Whether or not that is universally true, there is sufficient truth in it that it resonates. Why is it that so many people want to put a price on everything? To what extent would you agree that those in global positions of influence seem to have brought this way of thinking even more to the fore than previously? How does that kind of thinking square with Jesus’ teaching?
2. Mention was made on Sunday of the wildlife and countryside to be found around Montrose and Angus. How important is that to you? How might we, who live in close proximity to the countryside, show our care for it? How might we “speak up” for it when so many decisions that affect it come from those who live or work in big cities or in big business?
3. Clearly human beings have great worth. What does this passage say about our “worth” as human beings? How does God’s commitment to us differ from society’s attitudes to a) people in general, b) those who are vulnerable? Someone once told me that it costs nothing to smile. While there will be endless arguments about how to cover the cost of social care it doesn’t cost anything to show a bit of care or kindness. Why do we human beings find it so difficult?
4. Sadly, our society has a virtual pecking order or priority list even when it comes to care. But not only do hospitals prioritise ordinary human beings will adopt different attitudes to different groups depending upon our perception of their deserving or circumstances. What kind of factor is taken into account? How valid are these? To what extent do Christians fall into the same trap? How can we learn from Jesus and his attitude particularly towards those whom society counted as unworthy? Is there a time when deserving (or undeserving) should not be an issue – basic human need comes first?
5. If God cares for all then it stands to reason that God cares for everyone else too. How can we better develop attitudes that take this reality seriously? How do we care (and show God’s care) for our “neighbour” especially if they aren’t on our list of OK people? What has the gospel to say on this?
6. Anything else that arises from the passage or the service?

Prayer Heavenly Father, thank you for your generous love and care, for your openness to draw alongside those who are most in need of love and support. Help us to be ready to show that level of support and encouragement, drawing strength and inspiration from Jesus. Help us not only to talk the talk but to walk it too – to demonstrate in action as well as with words that we care because you care. Amen.