

**Good Morning and welcome to worship here at MPN.**

**As we continue to meet virtually, we are glad that you have joined us to worship God together.**

**Some news for you:**

**As you know I had my probation sustained at the end of June. Probation is 15 months and the last three months are looking for a charge. It's a bit like some of the programmes that I have been watching with Mum in these lockdown times. Location, Location and Escape to the Country. I haven't looked parishes abroad so I can't compare Sun, Sea and Selling Houses but you get where I am going.**

**I have been appointed Sole Nominee for the charge of Canonbie United with Liddesdale parish. I preach as Sole Nominee on the 13<sup>th</sup> September and this will be my final day at Monkton Prestwick North. I have to say that I have been really blessed by my time here with you. I thank you for your welcome to myself and my family. Your support and prayers during this probationary year that none of us would have ever predicted. A few weeks left to be with you.**

**Next Sunday we have our back to school with God Service. We will hear from our young people and pray for them and their schools for the coming year.**

**Our Call to Worship:**

**We, who are members of the one body,  
join together to praise God.**

**We, who are blessed with the gift of grace,  
join together to sing of God's glory.**

**We, who are part of the family of God,  
join together to affirm Jesus as Lord.**

**Let us worship God together.**

**Reading Matthew 16:13-20**

**Talk 2**

What do you answer when folks say who are you? I know I would say that I'm Morag, I'm a daughter, a sister, auntie, niece, I am a minister, a driver etc. I may even say depending on who I am talking to I come from Dalmellington. We are different things to different people and situations.

In our reading today we see that Jesus and his disciples have come to the region of Caesarea Philippi. A region that was as Roman as you could get. Roman culture, Roman Economy. There would have been Roman temples as they had walked through the city and Jesus and the disciples would have been aware of the many gods' who would have been worshipped there. A culture and religion vastly removed from the culture the disciples had been brought up in and vastly removed what they had witnessed in their time of training and mentoring with Jesus.

It's into this context that Jesus asks the question "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

And the response is some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.

Some say, the response folks attach to an answer that they don't want to take responsibility for, it's easier to say other folks think that, even when you agree or even when that is your answer. It's sometimes the way people answer questions, hiding behind other people. It's easier than taking responsibility for your thoughts.

Jesus knows the way people behave and:  
So Jesus asks but

"Who do you say I am?"

Jesus is saying I don't want to hear what others say, I want to get a feel of how much you have learned and are you prepared to step up and step out from the others. The time for the disciples to hide behind other people was coming to an end and they would either need to step up or go back to their lives before following Jesus.

Simon Peter then responds:

"You are the Christ, the Son of God."

At this moment in time Peter knows who Jesus is. The same Peter who a few chapters before had Jesus say he had little faith. Peter who

would be impulsive and angry, who would deny Jesus but at this moment he admits that he knows who Jesus is.

Far from perfect Peter gives all of us hope because if Peter can be a disciple .....all who come after him have that chance to follow Jesus. For Jesus knows the condition of all of us and knew that if he were to build his Church on earth, it would be built on broken and flawed people and he knew that would be ok. For he would be with them and give them the strength and courage and the million chances to get it right.

Peter is then called to build the first Church. What a great responsibility and I often wonder how Peter felt at this call. There were no models of mission to follow, no previous examples of congregations. He had followed Jesus and they had no fixed place to live and work. And then your called to build the Church! But he had seen Jesus day and night and knew that things would happen that he wasn't expecting but by agreeing to follow Jesus he would be with him in all life, even in the storms.

- “To follow Jesus implies that we enter into a way of life that is given character and shape and direction by the one who calls us. To follow Jesus means picking up rhythms and ways of doing things that are often unsaid but always derivative from Jesus, formed by the influence of Jesus. To follow Jesus means that we can't separate what Jesus is saying from what Jesus is doing and the way that he is doing it. To follow Jesus is as much, or maybe even more, about feet as it is about ears and eyes" (The Way of Jesus, Eugene H. Peterson, 22).”

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Peter and the disciples had lived with Jesus, been everywhere with him and had been mentored by him. They knew that there was only one Jesus. There wasn't a Jesus for the crowds and one for the days with the disciples. Jesus lived a uniformed life, faith and everyday life were one of the same thing.

For us who follow Jesus it is the same. But that is when it gets difficult for us. For we are followers of Jesus, not Jesus. And like Peter we have days when we are on the mountain top of life and then we have days like Peter when it's difficult and we are tried and tested to act in a Christlike way.

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**We've all been challenged during these last five months. We've been called to live another way. Our physical interactions with people are limited and it's getting easier and easier to become isolated and self-centred.**

**I found this wee story this week: You may have heard the story of two friends who met for dinner in a restaurant. Each requested filet of sole, and after a few minutes the waiter came back with their order. Two pieces of fish, a large and a small, were on the same platter. One of the men proceeded to serve his friend. Placing the small piece on a plate, he handed it across the table.**

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**"Well, you certainly do have nerve!" exclaimed his friend.**

**"What's troubling you?" asked the other. "Look what you've done," he answered. "You've given me the little piece and kept the big one for yourself."**

**"How would you have done it?" the man asked. His friend replied, "If I were serving, I would have given you the big piece."**

**"Well," replied the man, "I've got it, haven't I?" At this, they both laughed.**

**A wise person once said to me as a Christian I am a better person than the person I would be without being a follower of Christ. It's not that we will ever be perfect but each day we get a clean slate to try again.**

**So who do we say we are and who do follow?**

**Our lives should reveal the answers to these questions and the story of the gospel should speak into our lives.**

**Eugene Peterson:**

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***You're here to be LIGHT... Shine! Be generous with your lives***

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**To God the Father**

**God the Son**

**And God the Holy Spirit**

**Amen.**

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**Blessing (Morag)**

**Jesus, you ask us— ‘who do you say I am?’**

**Help us know you.**

**Grow our understanding of who you are, what you stand for,  
and what you require of us.**

**Let the door to such knowledge  
and relationship be unlocked.  
Let your Kingdom be born in us;  
and through us be born into our world.**

**The Blessing of God Almighty**

**Father, Son and Holy Spirit**

**Be with you and all those you love**

**Now and forever more**

**Amen.**