



KAURIHOHORE / KAMO CO-OPERATING PARISH

kaurichurch.methodist.org.nz

kaurichurch@gmail.com

(09) 946 0813

59 Apotu Road, Kauri Hohore



Sunday 26 October 2025 – Pentecost 20

The service today has been prepared by
Rosalie Gwilliam, one of our Lay Preachers.

Welcome to our service this morning.

In working together on our shared mission, we commit to seven core values:

Togetherness, Humility, Curiosity, Love, Inclusiveness, Justice, Sustainability.

Justice: we hope for a better world for all and work together to be part of making that happen.

Welcome

Song: [Rejoice in the Lord Always](#)

Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice.
Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice.
Rejoice, rejoice, and again I say rejoice,
Rejoice, rejoice, and again I say rejoice

Call to Worship (Joel 2, Psalm 65)

Rejoice in the Lord and be glad.

God is our hope and our salvation.

The Lord blesses the earth with the rain.

God crowns the year with bounty.

The Lord makes old men dream dreams.

God makes young girls see visions.

Rejoice in the Lord and be glad.

God is our hope and our salvation.

Mission Statement: Sharing God's love, creating hope, working for justice.

Prayer

Giver of dreams and visions, pour out your Spirit on our fellowship, for we need your presence in our lives. Show your portents in the heavens and set your signs on the earth and seas. Touch our spirits with the awe of your majesty, that we may humbly dwell within your courts in peace and harmony. Amen

Hymn HFTC 246: [Spirit of Holiness](#)

Psalm 65

Prayer of Yearning

Merciful God, prepare us for the marathon of life, even as we seek the ease of a leisurely stroll. May we never tire of fighting the good fight, nor fall exhausted from running our race. May we never grow weary from keeping the faith. Speak your words of promise once more, O God, for we need to find your quiet centre amid the noisy tumult of life.

Bless us with dreams and visions, that we may faithfully endure life's trials and receive your righteous crown, offered by Christ to those who love him. Let us rejoice and be glad.

followed by

The Lord's Prayer

Introduction to Readings

God enters our struggles to bring us joy. In Joel, the Israelites are given life-giving rain after years of drought. They also received the promise of prophecies, dreams, and visions.

Then, Paul writing to his friend Timothy, he contemplates his death, he rejoices that he has finished the race of faith and will receive the crown of righteousness.

In Luke, Jesus chastises those who build themselves up; but he offers forgiveness to those who humble themselves before God.

Scripture Readings

So, let us hear from Joel where the Spirit of the Lord will be poured out on all people who call on the name of the Lord.

Joel 2: 23-32

(page 1421)

Now we hear from Paul as he awaits his own execution and writes to his friend Timothy

2 Timothy 4: 6-8, 16-18 (page 1853)

We hear now Good News from Luke

Luke 18: 9-14 (page 1630)



Reflection

It was 10 o' clock on a Sunday morning and I was attending church in another town. I was there in an official capacity. I duly arrived and after greeting people I took my seat. As you might imagine I was on time. Much to my horror the minister concerned, and her helpers were running around, up and down the aisle, out the back, getting organised. You see it was a communion service and there was much to prepare. They were running late and in a muddle. I was most uncomfortable as the time went on and we were not ready to start the service. Eventually the minister took her place behind the pulpit, and the service commenced.

I am the personality type that likes to be ordered and organised – having consulted those who are contributing to the service, and arriving early. So, you can probably imagine just how I might regard someone who seems ill- prepared as the minister was on that day. I was sitting back watching this shambolic organisation, and beginning to think 'Thank God I'm not like that!'

The Pharisee stood up and prayed with himself like this 'I thank you God, that I am not like other men.'

The tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his chest saying 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'

Evidently, going to church can be a risky business.

One person might enter this sanctuary thinking: 'I feel good here. I'm doing okay, God. Thank you that I haven't fallen in temptation like some others I know. Bless me that I may keep up the good work.'

Another person might slip into this place thinking: I've got no right to be here, God. I really have screwed up and made a mess of life. If you can, God, have pity on me.'

According to Jesus, the first person could leave the church at odds with God, while the second one may leave very much okay with God.

Now, that's a bit of sharp discomfoting words from the Parable Man. Jesus just couldn't help himself, could he? He keeps on upsetting our ideas of what is appropriate or inappropriate, fair or unfair.



This story is vintage Jesus. It's very typical of him. It unsettles us, maybe confuses us a little, but throws us back into the arms of God's free grace.

Luke seems to be especially enthusiastic about this aspect of Christ. The familiar benediction which commences: 'the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ' may not have originated with Luke, but the theme is dear to his heart.

Here is an authentic gospel. Great news. Grace. The unbuyable, unpredictable, uncalculated, seemingly indiscriminate generosity of God to even the most despicable characters. Yes, I did say 'despicable characters.' In the parable, the tax collector is not painted as a really nice guy, in spite of his profession. He is a rogue, a despicable person. Our common use of the word 'tax collectors' as those who Jesus welcomed, must not blunt the fact that they were traitors; 'low lights' who collected taxes for the occupying army. These men were hated for good reason. They were the 'bag men' for Rome. With the broad swords of the Roman military behind them, they enforced the payment of tolls, even from the poorest of the poor. And they made extortionate profit from the business.

The tax man at the back of the Temple had been a blood sucking creep. I visualise him as very plump, well dressed, and wearing jewellery.

On the other hand, the Pharisee is truly a good man. I visualise him as lean from living with moderation and fasting often. He is trying very hard to do the right thing. The only commitment to fast for a Jew, was once a year on the day of Atonement. This chap is voluntarily doing it twice a week, (that would save on the grocery bill) but, what is more he doesn't only give a tenth of his income to the temple, he gives a tenth of the cost of anything he buys; just in case the shop keeper does not tithe his income. This is not one of those religious guys who gets legalistic and meticulously pays attention to legal requirements, but does not do a thing more. This man is generous. I'm sure we would love to have him as a member of our church.

So, where does the Pharisee go wrong and where does the tax collector get it right?

To start with, notice the odd way his praying is described: *the Pharisee prayed with himself like this*. Prayed with himself? He is airing his goodness before God rather than communing with God. Flaunting his virtues instead of falling down in awe before such beauty as holy love.



Things get worse. Where the Pharisee goes really wrong is when he attempts to justify himself by making comparisons with others. *Thank you, God, that I am not like some other men*. He attempts to find his soul's security by establishing his credentials as compared with the poor credentials of extortioners, the unjust, and adulterers.

You may have heard a similar comment from someone watching the news on TV or reading the paper. They comment on an item about some respectable person who has been caught breaking the law: 'I know I'm not a saint, but at least I'm not like that'.

In the presence of God, we are not siblings, jealous of each other and hoping to buy more parental love by being better than our sisters and brothers. We don't earn good points that way. Nor do we earn extra vouchers by bad-mouthing others. Our only justification for being in the Presence of God comes down to this: God's unconditional love for us. We are here because God wants us here.

The tax collector was a despicable man, but he knew he was and looked for nothing but the mercy of God. He knew he had no right in the Temple. He was aware that any comparison with others would leave him in debit. His only source of feeling okay was if God granted it to him. Grace is what the Gospel is fundamentally about.

Self - vindication leads to a disastrous poverty.

It is a tragedy that those who justify themselves leave no room to receive grace. Morally they may be living perfect lives; yet their well-stocked, neatly packed, self-justification leaves no gap for the grace of God to take hold. They go home not vindicated, not because God withholds grace but because they are not ready to receive it. If you are full of yourself, there is not much room for God.

On the other hand, all kinds of sinners who have given up all hope of self-vindication, find grace, mercy and peace. They have a hunger, a gnawing emptiness in their souls, a room for grace to enter and work miracles.

I have one final comment. A sting in the tail.

There is a little demonic trap lurking close by after we have heard this parable. It is the temptation for each of us to think 'Thank God I'm not like that Pharisee.'



Hymn HFTC 28: [Amazing Grace](#)

Offering Prayer

Whatever challenges we face, O God, we have also known your many blessings – threshing floors full of grain, vats overflowing with wine and oil.

Accept these gifts as tokens of our thankfulness, that they may be used to prophesy in your spirit, and to share your bounty with those in need. Amen.

Community time: Celebrations, Notices, Prayer Concerns

Prayer

*To the words: 'Send forth your Spirit, Lord',
Please respond **'and renew the face of the earth.'***

God of our hearts and homes, we thank you for your presence through this week in everything we've done. Some things we've done well; some things we've done badly. Some things we could show you; some we'd rather not. We remember these things quietly now; *silence*

Take the rag-bag of our everyday experience, we pray, and work upon it with your patient grace, so transforming us bit by bit into the likeness of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Send forth your Spirit

God of our health and happiness, we know you're committed to our wellbeing. We pray for those we know who are ill, lost or lonely, grieving, or facing some other major problem. These people we name in our hearts in silence now *silence*

We pray that they, and we may find health and healing on our journey to you.

Send forth your Spirit

God of our community in Kamo and Kaurihohore, and of our nation, thank you for those men and women who give themselves to politics and civic life to the renewal of our communities. They are often your agents of change while the rest of us sit at home and complain



Help us, Lord, to do as Paul said, and to recognise in local and national politics whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely – and to see it as part of your good plan and purpose to make all things new.

Send forth your Spirit

God of our resilient but damaged world, we have survived so much of our stupidity in war and greed and the abuse of our planet. Help us to live as true citizens, and to make the case for peace and justice and for the good earth in every corner of the Kingdom.

Send forth your Spirit

God of the universe, your renewing Spirit refreshes the farthest shores of creation. Help us Lord, this week, to live, as far as lies in us, in energy and joy, so our lives contribute to that glorious goal, as you send forth your Spirit

Hymn WOV 427: [Jesus, We Thus Obey](#)

Holy Communion

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord is here.

God's Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

With all your people in Heaven and on earth we give you thanks, Holy Father, for Jesus Christ, through whom all things are made; who in the fullness of time became flesh and lived among us, full of grace and truth; who in obedience suffered death on the cross, and was raised in triumph that we might have life.

Therefore, we worship and praise you, saying:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest.



Breaking of the bread.

Among friends, gathered round a table, Jesus took bread. Having blessed it, he broke the bread and gave it to his disciples saying:

‘This is my body, given for you.’

In the same way, he took the cup of wine, gave thanks for it and said:

‘This cup is the new relationship with God, sealed with my blood.’

In sharing this bread and wine, we remember the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, the One who shared his life with all, including Pharisees and tax collectors, the poor and the oppressed; the One who lived, was crucified, and raised to new life in God.

In sharing this bread and wine

we commit ourselves again to follow the way of Jesus,

to share in his pain and joy

and to claim the promise of new life for the entire creation.

In sharing this bread and cup

we celebrate a faith that gives us life and hope.

Come Holy Spirit, touch this bread and this cup that we might find food and drink for our faith journey. May our faith journey lead others into fullness of life in Christ. Amen

Invitation

Come, all things are ready, let us share this bread and cup together.

Communion will be served to you in your seats.

When you have received the bread

please hold it so that we can eat together. Likewise the cup.

Jesus said, ‘This is my body, given for you.’

Jesus said, ‘This cup is the new relationship with God, sealed with my blood.’

Prayer after Communion

Creator of all, we give you thanks and praise, that when we were still far off you met us in your Son and brought us home.

Dying and living, he declared your love, gave us grace and opened the gate of glory. 

May we who share Christ's body live his risen life; we who drink his cup bring life to others; we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.

Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us so we and your children shall be free, and the whole earth live to praise your name. Amen

Hymn HFTC 260: [Great is Your Faithfulness](#)

Benediction

Fight the good fight.

Finish the race.

Keep the faith.

Love deeply and live well.

Claim the crown of righteousness, which is given to all who love God and who yearn for Christ's appearance.

Sung Blessing WOV 572: [The Lord Bless You and Keep You](#)

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you:

The Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.

Three-fold Amen

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