

Remembrance: Walk in his ways

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Preacher: Rev Gordon Kennedy

[0 : 00] Let's share our prayer together. Heavenly Father, we humbly bow in your presence. May your word be our rule, your spirit our teacher, and your great glory our supreme concern.

! Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. What does the Lord require of us? It's a good question for a Remembrance Day when we seek to know how we should live to build communities of welcome and faith.

It's kind of like having an exam question. What does the Lord require of you? And then immediately being given the answer.

Because God right on goes to tell us what the answer is. What does the Lord require of you?

To fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord. That sounds like five different things.

[1 : 17] But actually, when we read the verses which follow, they come to just two things. What does the Lord require of you and me?

That we love the stranger. The English version that Campbell read for us had the word sojourner. Someone who lives in a community that has not always been their home.

We might say a stranger. Stranger is anyone who is in need. The fatherless and the widow are only two examples of those who are in need, who already live in our streets.

But anyone who has come to our city and our land, anyone who needs food and clothing, anyone who needs a welcome and a friendly face, we are to love them.

In teaching these things, God speaks through Moses of the example of history. God's people lived as sojourners, as strangers, for a long time in the land of Egypt.

[2 : 37] There were only a few when they went there, poor, hungry, in great need. And they found all that they needed in Egypt. And this example from their own story is to encourage them to welcome the stranger among them.

In our history, many of our ancestors first came to this land, to this city, as strangers. Perhaps refugees or immigrants.

Scotland is a mixed nation. Celts and Gales and Picts and Vikings and a wee bit of this and a wee bit of that.

We are a nation where people have found a place to make their home, to work, to provide themselves and their family, to build a community into which we have been born and lived and made welcome.

The example from our story and our history is of strangers being welcomed. And the Lord requires of us that we follow this example, that we love and welcome the stranger.

[3 : 55] We are to live actively, doing things. We need to be aware and alert to the presence of the stranger among us.

There are many people in our streets, in our city who have come here, perhaps of their own choice, or too many who have been brought here and all of them need our help.

They don't know our customs, they don't know how we do things. They are confused and uncertain. They need someone to smile with them, someone to listen to them, someone to be patient with them, someone to go with them and show them the way around, someone to make them feel welcome.

That doesn't sound too hard, does it? The Lord requires us to live lives with an attitude of welcome, acceptance.

In the same way as our saviour Jesus has loved and accepted us, we are to love and welcome the stranger. This is what the Lord requires of us.

[5 : 13] A second thing is that we are to serve the Lord. Love the stranger and serve the Lord are not two choices, but one way of life.

The two belong together. Indeed, you cannot love the stranger unless you serve the Lord and you do not serve the Lord unless you love the stranger.

There is only one God, the God of the Bible, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and we are to serve him. We are to depend upon him. This is what we do when we pray.

We are to honour him and worship him. This is what we do when we sing together. We are to know him and learn of him so that we might make him known to others.

We are to live as the people of our God. He alone is God and we are to love him and serve him. This is what the Lord requires of us, that we serve the Lord and as we do this, we will build strong communities, healthy communities where the stranger is welcomed and where the Lord is served.

[6 : 37] Moses said, what does the Lord require of you? That you walk in all his ways. Jesus said, follow me. They come to the same thing.

There is a godly way to live, a way of life which reflects the love and grace of God for us and for all. God has shown us all what he requires of us.

God himself guides us into this way of life. but we actually need to live it. We actually need to walk in all his ways.

We need to give ourselves to care for the strangers among us. We need to give ourselves to serve and honour our God.

This is his way. This is what he requires of us. It's time for us to walk in all his ways. Let's pray together.

[7 : 39] God our Father be at work among us. Hold before us a vision of your life that we might walk into it. Strengthen us to love you and serve you.

To love and welcome every stranger. To honour you in all that we are and in all that we do. We ask these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen.