Te Pouhere Sunday C 2022 **Isa 42:10-20** 2 Cor 5:14-19 Luke 6:46-49 **Scott MALCOLM**

Lottie lived in a big house.

It was so big all her relatives and friends lived there too. It had a huge garden which supplied all the food they ever needed. It was surrounded by rivers and sea so there was enough for everyone. Lottie thought she lived a happy life.

Most of the time it was just them, the relatives and the friends. They would work and eat and live and play together. They had ways of doing things and everyone had their place in the family.

It worked well.

Occasionally, very occasionally, they would have visitors. They often came from a long way away, so there would be a welcome and a time of who knew who and who was related to who, it was always fun, but visitors didn’t come very often.

Sometimes there was danger. But this didn’t happen very often either. Sometimes unfriendly people would come, they would want to take what wasn’t theirs. When this happened, everyone would come together and make a big noise and scare the unfriendly strangers away.

Then one day the different visitors arrived.

They had unusual clothes, spoke a strange language and had tools for doing all kinds of unheard-of tasks.

The different visitors came and went for a while. Lottie learnt their language and they learnt Lottie’s. Life in the big house changed because of the visitors’ tools and implements. Some stayed and became part of them as they fell in with Lottie’s cousins, sisters and aunts even. They were a welcome and loved part of the big household. They were family.

But as more and more and more of the different visitors arrived this wasn’t so. There became so many of them, that things started going wrong. Fights broke out. Things went missing, people got hurt and the proper way of doing things was being ignored and disrupted.

So, the people; Lottie’s and the different visitors got together and had a meeting. They decided they needed some new rules. Simple rules that protected everyone and stopped wrong things being done. Rules that meant the different visitors and Lottie’s people could live together as two peoples, in peace.

These new rules were a marvellous thing. They said Lottie’s people had guardianship and care of all the big house; the garden, the river and the sea, but that this was to be shared with the different visitors because Lottie’s people agreed, there was enough for everyone.

It seemed to go well at the start, but then more and more and more of the different visitors arrived and most of them didn’t care or want to know about the rules, they were only interested in what they could take and get for themselves.

The rules were soon disregarded all together and something new was pushed forward, a government.

The only people who could make decisions in this government were people who owned land. Lottie’s people had lots of land but couldn’t be involved because the government said that land could only be owned by one person. In Lottie’s world, the land belonged to the family.

So, they had no say in any of the decisions the government made.

This government made new rules. Rules that favoured the decision-making members of the government and the different visitors.

The old rules were forgotten.

New rules kept on being added. Soon it was that not just men with the land making the decisions, but all men got a say. When this happened Lottie’s people got 4 votes and the visitors 72. Then all women got to vote. Lottie’s people still only got 4 votes; the visitors got even more.

Still the new rules continued to come, and still the old rules were forgotten.

It was hard for Lottie’s people, the visitors outnumbered them and had the power to make sure they got what they wanted, and that what Lottie’s people wanted … didn’t matter.

But still, they kept trying. Struggling for their language, for the land, for the people, for the rivers and the sea and the bush. Struggling for the big house they lived in.

Then after many years … things began to change.

Even in government. The old rules were rediscovered, dusted off and recognised. They got their own place, and specialised people to discuss how the old rules applied in a new world. The old rules started to be heard. Many things that had been ignored, got put right.

And things kept changing. In society. Education. Health. In local government. Church. In popular culture.

The old rules spoke louder and louder and Lottie’s people became more recognised because of it.

One of Lottie’s 4x great grandnieces even got in to the government, she became a Senior Minister.

But many of the visitors, some who were new and some who had lived in the big house for a long time still didn’t want to know. They had gotten used to things working for them and being powerful. They didn’t see why Lottie’s people should get anything, and sometimes they were very mean about it.

One day Lottie’s 4x grandniece was sent a message on the internet … that called her the "N-word".

The message read: "F off out of Parliament you overpaid, useless, fifing n word".

The visitor who sent this message, said that he did not regret using that language, or saying those things ... "Not at all.”

So, while a lot of things were changing … some were not.

And so, we pray …

“Lord, lead the blind by a road they do not know, by paths they have not known. Turn the darkness before them into light, the rough places in to level ground. That they may look up and see. Do these things Lord and do not forsake us! Do this for the sake of your righteousness.”

Amen.