

Paul spoke in the letter to the Galatians today about not misusing the freedom we have.

Not to use it for self-indulgence, but to use our freedom to love our neighbour.

I wonder what freedom you think you have, and how you'd think about using it for your neighbour near or far?

Well I want to invite you this morning to think about the blessings you have of toilets

And that for a price of a cup of coffee, if you were free to give that amount of money

You could show such love to someone that it would change not just their life, but their families life.

15 % of Indians go the toilet every day by the side of the road, or in a field.

Jesus - in our story - was on the road - where do you think he went to the toilet?

That's 20 million people in India.

Globally they reckon that 1.7 billion don't have somewhere safe to go the toilet.

And I know we take it for granted but we shouldn't. We should be much more grateful.

What would it be like if we didn't have toilets?

I went to Hardy's cottage recently, and he was persuaded by a local vicar to build an earth closet - a house for a loo, because it was much better for everyone's health.

Victorian England was rife with diarrhoea, cholera, dysentery, typhoid - and not just in the cities - even in Hardy's Dorset.

And since the population of the world has gone up 5 fold.

That's more population density, and more poo - which means more disease.

Simple isn't it - a toilet keeps the poo in one place, and you can deal with it.

Stop the disease spreading, getting into the water supply.

Even better - if you build a roof - make it a special room - it keeps you safe from snakes and things that might attack you, and from people. If you're a vulnerable woman.

Here's a video about a woman and a family in the Ivory Coast, a place where 3/4's of the population don't have a toilet.

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Without proper toilets and clean water, people are trapped in a vicious cycle:
They're likely to become sick through sanitation-related diseases
Illness means they cannot work or farm their land, so they earn less or grow less food
Children often miss school, because they are sick or because they're busy collecting water
Girls often drop out of school altogether when they start their periods if there are no toilets or changing rooms
Parents have to pay for medicines or food, so they may fall into debt
Women and girls risk being attacked or bitten by snakes as they go to the toilet in the open, especially if the culture dictates that they have to go out at night

In our reading, Jesus says we should proclaim the Kingdom of God?
What does that look like to you?
Is it all - head knowledge - who Jesus is, what God is like?
It is all spiritual - feel the love of the Lord
Is it practical - to love our neighbour?

Could be it be that the good news, the gospel - might be - to some people - we're going to help you build a toilet?

I think so. That is love in action.

Water and sanitation projects enable families to build a toilet, have access to clean water, and to learn about hand-washing and other hygiene principles. Dignity is restored when the whole family can use a private, hygienic toilet at their home and no longer have to squat in the bush.

So yes, I'm asking for money!
Through Toilet Twinning, you help fund a project in a poor community that will enable families to build a basic toilet, have access to clean water and learn about hygiene – a vital combination that saves lives.
They ask just £60 and then you get a photo of toilet, twinned with yours!
We have one toilet done in the church hall - wouldn't it be great to do the other?!

And if we had spare money, maybe we could do the ones in the Village Hall or the Reading Room?
Or maybe you could do one of yours at home.