



Broomhill Hyndland
Parish Church

"Lighting the Way"

for **Sunday 12 July 2020**

Dear friends,

Welcome to another Sunday Reflection.

This Sunday the Manse family were supposed to be sunning themselves in Greece but, as is obvious, this did not happen. Restrictions are easing, quarantines are being lifted but our holiday was cancelled. Whether we wanted to sit on a beach with a face mask on and be unable to visit the sights because they were closed is another matter all together.

Holidays will come again - 'stay-cation' is the in-phrase but where we can 'stay' even in Scotland is limited also. As a child when school holidays came I hankered for somewhere the sun would shine rather than watching the tar melt on the pavement. I wished for sand inbetween my toes rather than playing 'kerby' with my friends (the ones who hadn't left on vacation). Changed days indeed.

This Sunday the Reflection is on the Parable of the Sower. It's a Parable we know well - but try and read it with new eyes and think what it might be saying to you today.

The time for re-opening our buildings is closer but we need a full risk assessment and the appropriate documents to be in place as well as Kirk Session approval that we are ready. You might have been unable to attend the building but we have never been on holiday.

Such has been the excellent work of many in the congregation and the fact that whilst God rested on the seventh day, we know the Almighty never takes a holiday.

Take care, worship well, trust in God,

George

Pentecost 7A Sunday 12 July 20 (Proper 10)

For those who like to follow all the lectionary readings for the Sunday and dip into the Old Testament and Epistles, the readings for this Sunday are: Genesis 25:19-34; Isaiah 55:10-13; Psalm 119:105-112; Romans 8:1-11; Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23.

Our Sunday reflection will be based on Matthew but please read and ponder the suggested Scripture and see how it connects and what it says to you.

.... read, reflect, rejoice...

INTROIT

For the fruits of all creation,
thanks be to God;
for the gifts of every nation,
thanks be to God;
for the ploughing, sowing, reaping,
silent growth while we are sleeping,
future needs in earth's safe-keeping,
thanks be to God. (231 CH4)

Welcome to our time of worship in homes and in hearts.

CALL

Living God,
as we meet together now,
sow the seed of your word in our hearts.
May it find a place to grow,
despite all that competes in our lives.
May shoots of faith be able to withstand
the temptations and pressures that threaten to choke them
and may new growth be seen among us,
leading to a rich harvest of lives won for you.
In Christ's name we ask it.
AMEN

The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

PRAYER

'Once there was a man
who went out to sow corn...'
And we, Harvesting God,
do so too.
We know the seeds we have sown:
the anger that
springs from our flinty, stony hearts;
hurtful words
which wrap the thorny briars
around the kindness of others;
the passion
which poisons another relationship.
Even in our urban concrete world, Lord,
it is easy to be a farmer
and disperse
disaster as well as delight,
sometimes unconsciously
before we even think.

Forgive us, Lord,
when we open our mouths
before we have engaged our brains;
forgive us
for forgetting that we have two ears
to listen;
forgive us also
for farming in places where we believe
the yield will be great
and miss out on the land that needs more nurture.

Turn our fallow hearts
into rich fields of your love,
help us untangle the mess we can make of our lives
Sower of Creation.
May we be sowers of comfort and joy,
sowers of justice and reconciliation
in the highways and byways
and the corners of creation.
In your name we pray saying,
'Our Father...'
AMEN

And now we turn to Scripture, to Matthew
13:1-9, 18-23
Let us listen, read and hear the Word of God ...
... this is the Word of the Lord, thanks be to
Him.



Before the Reflection listen quietly to music or listen to the quietness and let
God in.
Say 'Speak, Lord, your servant is listening' softly in repetition.

ILLUMINATION

God of Creation, turn over the soil of our hearts that they may receive the
seeds of truth from you. Cultivate us that we may yield good things. AMEN

REFLECTION

I know it is hard to believe...
but I used to go to the gym!

Especially in my thirties I would be up with the lark and drive down to the
gym at Love Street and wait for the building to open up at 7am.

There, I would lift weights, run on the machines, stretch this way and that,
and was even allowed to run round the football park and up and down the
stadium stairs. It was hard going but after a shower I felt great and would

sit down for a healthy lunch with some members of my congregation.

Now climbing the manse stairs is an effort!

As a man it is the 'middle' that causes the problem, the most difficult place to lose that weight. I read recently that no amount of abdominal crunches is going to make any difference, what is needed is cardio-vascular work that will make my heart work hard enough to burn off the calories.

The phrase, 'No gain without pain', came to mind.

I suppose that's true. You slog away studying for exams and degrees. You work hard at improving in a sport, or cooking, or learning another language. It doesn't come easy, at least for most of us.

We probably can all recall looking out our room windows on warm days wishing to get out but knowing we had to re-read our notes, re-write them again, turning the flashcards over and try to remember.

Someone connected with business one said, "If you aren't making mistakes you aren't doing anything worth a damn."

Here lies the message of the Parable of the Sower which could be called 'The Stupid Farmer.' The farmer shows recklessness, carelessness and wildness in the way he scatters the seeds. He seems to waste them – we know the story of the different places they fell. He doesn't (as far as we are aware – though that's a different sermon) reap everywhere and it seems unbelievably foolish and imprudent to be so rash and out of control.

The fool is God.

He's the one who tells us to go to all nations and preach the word and he doesn't seem to care if people are listening or not. He says, 'Preach' and the command is unconditional. When Moses lacked the words to face an angry Pharaoh, God said "Speak." When Ezekiel reminded God that a valley of dry bones was not the most enthusiastic congregation ever spoken to, God said, "Preach to the bones."

God doesn't want us to calculate, or count, or measure, – like the Nike advert, 'Just do it.' I think God is right, and as we minister and carry out mission there will be 'pain before we gain'.

I received an email last week to tell me that the National Church will have lost around 30 million pounds due to this pandemic.

The Radical Plan will need to be more radical. Cost-cutting will be sharper and more severe. For us as a congregation this applies too – to make progress, to gain ground, there will be pain.

To be fit, as an individual, to be in better shape, we have to eat better and exercise more. We know this is true. To learn a new language you cannot avoid the verbs, especially the irregular ones – you just have to commit them to memory or create a new pathway in your brain, particularly a pictorial one that will help easier recall and then repeatedly travel down that path to make sure it doesn't get overgrown.

Similarly, the gardener knows the grass will need cut again, the weeds tended to, the plants watered or the garden will go to rack and ruin. Suffering is

part of the process to achieve something. To succeed working hard is necessary.

It was a Jane Fonda video (no, I don't have it!!) which, with her aerobics, may have coined the phrase, 'no gain without pain.' 'Feel the burn,' she would call out as viewers were encouraged to work past that muscle ache. It was Kelly Clarkson who sang, "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger... what doesn't kill you makes you a fighter, footsteps even lighter..." though it is attributed to Friedrich Nietzsche!

We have gone through hard times, and tough situations build strong people. Many people will have a positive shift in life adopting a new world view, hopefully with stronger relationships and more satisfied spiritually.

But there will be no gain without pain. There will be no gain without the pruning. To gain more footholds in the Kingdom of God will be hard. As a congregation, to be fitter, stronger, healthier even, to make the gains, there will be pains.

In Jesus' telling of the Parable, the stress on the types of soils is not there. It's a Parable about wastefulness. It's a Parable about risk-taking. It's a Parable about making mistakes and with the pain of them, the harvest is gained.

Are you ready ?

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit

PRAYER

Carefree God,
who throws and scatters the seeds
and watches the wind blow them
'God knows where',
we praise you.
We praise you
that you take a chance
fortune favouring the brave.
You know that you will be successful
and that seed will take hold
but there will be other seeds
that despite even your effort
will not.
You scatter indiscriminately
because you know
that some seeds will not sow
in neat rows of respectability,
in fenced-off faith,
in places where we might expect.
To gain a harvest,
there will be loss,

there will be pain,
where life did not grow
and transform the barrenness
and remained unfruitful.
Carefree God,
encourage us together to scatter,
to spread your word of hope and joy,
knowing that the tending,
the weeding,
the gardening will be hard.
Lord,
we seek growth
that we may find good soil
and produce a harvest of peace
of love.
AMEN

BENEDICTION

Blessings of seed to stalk,
bud to blossom,
stem to bouquet,
be given to us, by us, from us, each day,
as we seek to do your will.
And the Blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be with you all
AMEN

Whose house is this?

(Last week, it was Joyce
and Mat Morton)



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