



Broomhill Hyndland
Parish Church

"Lighting the Way"

for Sunday 14 February 2021

Dear friends,

Welcome to another Sunday service.

This coming Wednesday is Ash Wednesday, the day we step into our Lenten journey towards Easter. I wonder if it could have been the Bible which gave us the link between mountain tops and 'high level' talks, that we now call summits?

Moses, or rather God started it by summoning him to Sinai to a pretty exclusive meeting and here, in Mark's gospel, another summit is called where Moses, Elijah and Jesus are present. We all just love meetings, don't we: whether a good old fashioned Kirk Session meeting in the Marlborough Sanctuary or, at the moment, by computer and by Zoom! The Church is well known for having a meeting about meetings - one of the problems of such a structure! Whatever way you understand the conversation on that mountain we know, as the Mission Praise song reminds us, 'Jesus stand among us, at the meeting of our lives.'

Jesus meets us where we are - thank God. In all our triumphs and tragedies, he meets us, mends us and marvels at us too, in what we try to do in his name. For all who have served him so well, in those named below, he meets and walks with them in a more special way. Keep all the families and friends, colleagues and workmates in your prayers this day.

We are encouraged by the Presbytery World Mission Committee to remember the week of Prayer for the Diocese of Hyderabad from the 28th February to the 7th March and members of congregations are asked to write to their M.P.s, expressing deep concern at the recently announced cuts to the UK Aid Budget and asking them to review their policy.

In our prayers this Sunday, we remember:

Alex Hutcheon's funeral, that took place on Monday;

Jean Gillies' funeral, which takes place on Thursday the 18th;

Margaret Hamilton's funeral, which takes place on Friday the 19th;

the death of Mabel Sharp's sister, Alison, on Monday;

the death of Anna Patrick, on Wednesday;

the death of the Rev Alan Dunnett, former member of Partick South, on the 3rd of February; and the death of Stephen Mitchell, the Manager of the Lodging House Mission, who died on last Sunday.

Jesus stand among us. He does indeed.

George

Sunday 14 February - Transfiguration Sunday (Year B)

For those who like to follow all the lectionary readings for this Sunday they are:
2 Kings 2: 1-12; Psalm 50: 1-6; 2 Corinthians 4: 3-6; Mark 9: 2-9.

For those who miss the hymns I have added them in here. Sunday's hymns are:
448 Lord, the light of your love is shining; 456 Christ is the world's true light;
559 There is a Redeemer; 355 You, Lord, are both Lamb and Shepherd.

In the Zoom services you'll find the words on the screen – so, in the safety of your own home, sing along!

Our Sunday reflection will be based on 2 Kings but please read and ponder the suggested Scripture and see how it connects and what it says to you.

Rest in His arms read, reflect, rejoice...

CALL

From the shadows of isolation and shutdowns,
we gather to be with our God.
From the silence of our homes
or in socially distanced worship spaces,
we gather to be with Jesus,
who will not let anything separate us.
From the hollowness of our hearts
and the hunger for human touch,
we gather to be with the Spirit,
who feeds us for the Lenten journey
and who marks us as God's very own.

REFLECTIVE MUSIC FROM RAZVAN

PRAYER OF APPROACH

God of glory, how lovely on the mountains
are the feet of those who bring Good News.
God of Light and Splendour,
you took your friends with you
when you went to pray on the mountain.
You revealed to them the glory of Jesus,
your beloved Son, on his way to the cross.

We do not live on mountaintops,
but we too would glimpse your glory in the ordinary days of our lives,
and in the community of your Son in which you have chosen to dwell.

We look for you among people who have
no power; no rights; no voice.

We look for you among those who live on the streets of our city,
whose housing is inadequate, whose homes are not safe.

We look for you among those who grieve a past that is no more

and fear a future that seems full of loss.

We look for you in the work against a virus,
the care given through it, the love shared from a distance
that reaches deep within.

Father, forgive us, when our lives are less than 'dazzling',
and our actions not as white as the driven snow.

God who meets us in the broken places,
shine the light of Christ deep into our lives
so we may carry that light into dark places
and point to the One whose brokenness is our salvation.

(The Lord's Prayer - together we say...)

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors,
and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever, AMEN

Let us turn to God's Word, found in 2nd Kings 2: 1-12.
'This is the Word of God. Thanks be to Him.'



...and now a hymn to sing along to, as we contemplate the readings.

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Holy God, mighty and immortal, you are beyond our knowing, yet we see your glory in the face of Christ, whose compassion illumines the world. Transform us into the likeness of the love in Christ, who renewed our humanity so that we might share in his divinity, the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. AMEN

REFLECTION

'All right everyone. I want to address the elephant in the room' said the little girl, serving the tea to her toys. 'Haven't you heard, we are all switching to PG Tips now.'

It is a sad reflection of the length of time stuck indoors that you remember the adverts that appear on your television screen! Who doesn't remember Gordon, the caretaker, who methodically maintains the Tetley Tea Garden, or 'where everything is done proper,' in the Yorkshire tea ad?

The little girl wants to address 'the elephant in the room': a phrase used to describe a controversial issue which is present but is avoided as a topic for discussion.

This Sunday is Transfiguration Sunday and I was drawn towards the miraculous story found in 2nd Kings of the relationship of Elijah and Elisha. It's an amazing

climax for a young man, called to follow Elijah into a new vocation. The story begins when Elisha, ploughing the fields of his father, is met by Elijah in the muddy fields, who wraps his cloak around his shoulders and takes him away to learn from the prophet.

Elisha becomes, in many ways, Elijah's shadow, not just following in his footsteps but holding dear every word the prophet says. Their relationship is so close, it becomes painful for Elisha to let go and say goodbye.

He won't face 'the elephant in the room.'

The community around him try to help him express his feelings and deal with the impending loss but his answer constantly is,

'Yes I know, but let's not talk about it.'

'Let's not talk about it. Let's ignore it, in the hope that it will go away.'

Like the little girl in the advert, there's going to be a switch and there's an elephant in the room.

On Tuesday night I thought I would entertain myself, as the snow piled up outside, by attending Glasgow Presbytery by Zoom. It ticked along in its usual fashion until the report came from the Strategy Committee which talked about reductions in ministry, the hiring of a consultant, cluster churches and a new Presbytery Plan and avoiding a policy that dealt with 'the management of decline'.

One minister, in agreeing faithfully to pray for the Committee's work, said that the storms approaching for our denomination 10 years ago were now here, and the comments afterwards to his challenging words, by the Presbytery, were non-existent. The Church is facing a massive change, the elephant has been in the room at Presbytery and in 121 George Street for a long time, but the attitude and response is similar to Elisha:

'Let's not talk about it.'

Let's not talk about the fact that we have too many buildings.

Let's not talk that we have churches in the wrong places.

Let's not talk about the decline in membership year in, year out.

'I need to take the next steps alone,' says Elijah. 'No,' says Elisha, 'I will never leave you.' 'Do you know that God is about to call your master in a whirlwind and a chariot of fire?', said the prophets.

'Shut up,' says Elijah, 'I don't want to talk about it.'

Transfiguration Sunday is not just about mountain top experiences, the connection with Jesus and the Old Testament prophets, it is about change. From the Epiphany experience of seeing the divinity of Jesus, the story moves to Jesus facing Jerusalem and the cross at Golgotha.

And like Elisha, those on the mountain don't want to face the change.

And like Elisha, neither do we.

We are on the threshold of something new, something challenging, and also frightening. For Elisha, everything he has ever known is about to change dramatically and he doesn't want to know.

He doesn't want to talk about it.

The elephant is in the room, the switch to a different approach and a new way of working faces Elisha, and he is filled with grief and sorrow, hurting and in denial, worrying that without Elijah he doesn't have the skill or the where-with-all to understand the calling and the will of God.

'Let's not talk about it.' You know, after the Presbytery, I could have wept, wept well more than normal. For us, as a church, like Elisha, we've only known one way of being the church, of 'doing' our faith. If I have understood my colleague on Tuesday night, the chariots have already come: the fire, the wind, the horses. For us, Elijah has already left us behind.

Elisha needed to understand that epiphanies, like the disciples on the mountain with Jesus, come with a price. That maturity in our faith requires us to move from the mountain to ground level, from light to the shadows, from power and certainty to uncertainty and vulnerability.

And in Jewish tradition, he tore his clothes in grief.

He has only silence. He has only questions. The vision has come and gone. He will only know what's God's plan for him is when he accepts his loss, when he lets go and he faces the elephant in the room and talks about it.

We have to talk about it too.

We have to ask ourselves, even locally, where has the Church got to from the Presbytery Plan. In that last one, we talked of churches coming together, parish groupings, too many buildings, ministry in the wrong place – how much progress was made? It seems to me, very little. And now, more Plans, more discussions about collaborative ministry but nothing changes – except the rolls of many congregations.

We are about to enter Lent, a time in our Christian calendar that we look inward at our faithfulness to the man who comes from the top of the mountain and says, 'Follow me.' The feelings of the disciples who wish to build tents and Elisha to hold on to Elijah, are the same – hankering back to what we liked, felt good about it and what gave us comfort.

'Let's not talk about it', is the worst thing we can do.

We have to accept the inevitability of the change around us and accept the loss and the sorrow and then change and grow. We need to remember, through the change comes resurrection.

The reality is there for the switch, as the PG advert reminds us. The elephant is in the room.

We have to wake up and smell the coffee.

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

AMEN

OFFERTORY PRAYER

God of Transformation,

we come together as those who have met you on the mountaintop.

We have each had our holy encounters with you;

and in those moments,

we have wanted to stay on the mountain and retreat from the world.

We know that is our longing, not yours.

So, as we offer our gifts this morning in response to your blessings in our life,

remind us that our mission begins as we leave this place,

and help us hold our memories of those mountaintop encounters with you in our hearts.

We pray boldly in Jesus' name. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

'Shining white', that's what the Gospel writer wrote,
struggling for words for the correct imagery
to portray what the disciples saw.
On the mountain, Moses the Lawgiver
and the number 1 prophet, Elijah!
And all Peter could think of was 'three dwellings'!
Really, Peter? Build more churches?
Perhaps a good idea but not in the same place and in the same way
and in the same manner as before,
to keep the status quo and coat hooks.
'This is my Son, listen to him,' God said.
Not bigger buildings, not a revival per se,
not fundraisers that are poured down the drain, but to listen.
No monument, no memorial, but to listen and learn
then talk about the journey to the Cross.
Help us to let go of that which prevents travelling with you,
to be content in where and how we dwell.
Help us to open our eyes to the reality of discipleship,
to focus on the priorities of our faith that will make your kingdom grow.
'Let's talk'.
Let's get down from the mountain
and carry out your mission. AMEN

SENDING HYMN

BENEDICTION

From the glory we turn towards the darkness,
the mountain top back to the valley floor.
The colours change and the light is different but the journey is always onward.
Go now, the time of preparing is near, and come back ready for the journey,
the cross is looming.
Go in Peace... and May the Blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit
be with you all.

**SIT MOMENTARILY,
AND LET GOD'S PRESENCE ENCIRCLE YOU AS YOU LISTEN TO RAZVAN,
AS WE DO IN THE SANCTUARY.**

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