



Broomhill Hyndland
Parish Church

"Lighting the Way"

for **Sunday 7 February 2021**

Dear friends,

Welcome to another Sunday service.

We are very close to the beginning of Lent, a time that encourages us to look inward to help us look outward. In the news this week was the death of a man who looked outward to help others - Sir Tom Moore. His efforts in older age were truly remarkable and a reminder of how little steps can make such a difference in the world that we live in.

We seem also to be making little steps in the vaccine progress. It is quite uplifting when, in conversation with some of you, the chat begins with 'I've had my jag.'

The quicker the better, I say, in making our world a safer place.

In our services on Zoom we are trying to make progress. A few Sunday's ago we introduced the words of the hymns: this Sunday, if it works technologically, Razvan will be more on board - again little steps.

In our prayers this Sunday locally we remember the funerals to take place of Alex Hutcheon on February 8th; Jean Gillies on February 18th and Margaret Hamilton on February 19th. Please remember all the families in your prayers.

As always, I want to thank all of you for your part in our Church community. As the recent advert suggests 'roll up your sleeves' - thanks to all who have done so.

Every blessing,

George

***Remember our helpline number, 07851 591 503,
if you are needing help with shopping through this time of Lockdown***

Sunday 7 February - Epiphany 5 (Year B)

For those who like to follow all the lectionary readings for this Sunday they are: Isaiah 40:21-31; Psalm 147:1-11, 20c; 1 Corinthians 9:16-23; Mark 1:29-39.

For those who miss the hymns I have added them in here. The congregation in Naseby and in Kingsborough, whilst unable to sing them, have enjoyed following the words, giving them an opportunity to think more of what they mean and how they tie into the theme of the service. Sunday's hymns are: 755 Be still and know that I am God; 167 Guide me, O thou great Jehovah; 718 We cannot measure how you heal; 706 For the healing of the nations.

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 Mark 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

God comes into a world filled with uncertainties and darkness.

God seeks out the voids of belief and conviction.

God embraces the wounded and broken.

God knocks down the walls of division and strife.

God is the candle shining in the darkness of our days.

God is the light of our lives.

God is the one who makes all things new.

Praise be to God, now and forevermore!

REFLECTIVE MUSIC FROM RAZVAN

PRAYER OF APPROACH

Healing God,

we cannot begin to imagine

the mystery of your love.

How can we estimate

the value of your compassion and mercy?

In our weaknesses and brokenness,

in our strengths and wholeness,

we find the touch of your support.

In our fears and suffering,

in our joys and pleasures,

we find the moistness of your tears

and the percussion of your laughter.

In our failures and despair,

in our successes and dreams,

we find the comfort of your forgiveness

and the inspiration of your Spirit.

Lord Jesus,

if human frailty becomes a burden to us,

if sickness seizes us in mind or flesh,

if the pain of loved ones

becomes hard to bear,

Jesus healer,

be our health.

Jesus,

if life's deep questions overpower us,

if ignorance leads to prejudice and hate,

if human folly spoils the life

that you have been given,

Jesus,

teacher,
be our wisdom.
Jesus,
if ever human friendship spoils and withers,
if loneliness becomes the daily path we tread,
if it should seem that a virus is winning.
Jesus, friend,
be our companion.
You are the home we long for,
the family where we discover we truly belong,
the hearth where we are warmed and renewed.
We worship you Healing God
with our whole being.

(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 Mark 1: 29-39
'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

God of life, God of hope, God of all, lift us on your love like eagle's wings. Sustain us, guide us, heal us. Then send us forth into the world that we may love as you love. AMEN

REFLECTION

'Does your chewing gum lose its flavour on the bedpost overnight?'
How is that for a metaphysical question on a Sunday morning?

Let me say, from the beginning, that I detest chewing gum, and bubble gum for that matter. In fact any type of gum! I have had sleepless nights, tossing and turning, when my mind takes me back to the teenage years and girls in particular, blowing enormous bubbles and then watching them burst, then the remains were collected by the tongue, to be re-chewed for another attempt.

As I said, I hate gum and find it infuriating when someone is talking to me with their jaws in action: the mess it makes on the streets, and where people put it and stick it when they are done!

Enough said!

But what brought that 1959 Lonnie Donegan song to mind as I contemplated this Sunday's reading from the Gospel?

Maybe, quite simply, it is because I don't have all the answers. Mark records that after speaking with authority in the Synagogue, Jesus heals the mother-in-law of Peter. Hearing that she is confined to bed with a fever he takes her hand and lifts her up. She is restored to health and later 'all the people of the town gathered in front of the house', seeking help.

Barbara Brown Taylor writes:

"The problem with miracles is that it is hard to witness them without wanting one of your own. Every one of us knows someone who is suffering. Every one of us knows someone who could use a miracle but miracles are hard to come by."

I think the story can be hard to read for all of us normally but especially so during this pandemic. I love Jesus' miracles. I love his healing stories but then comes the deep and meaningful question, far deeper than the sudden departure of taste from chewing gum: why are some people healed and others not? Why do some prayers seem answered and others not? Why do some people have no effects with COVID and others not?

I don't know whether you picked up on it or not but Mark records that 'Jesus healed many'. I wonder if, even then, the implication is that Jesus did not heal everyone. He casts out 'many demons' but he still touches all in alternative ways of healing. Maybe there were times, not recorded, where he sits with a depressed man and just sits. Maybe there were times he comforted parents, worried about their child's Jewish education and their inability to learn the Torah. Maybe there were times when he lifted those from the street after a party and, rather than chastising them, gave them a shoulder to lean on so that they returned home safely.

These are all maybes because healing comes in many forms.

Healing could be acceptance.

Healing could be letting go.

Healing could be accepting your own mortality.

Healing for Mark is the offer to the sick and the broken: Jesus steady presence and the good news that the Kingdom of God is coming, a Kingdom without sorrow, sickness and fear. Personally my health concerns can pull me down but there is an answer, as I've indicated there are at least three – an acceptance of who I am; perhaps the grief of losing my younger self (older age does not come alone); and the healing of Jesus presence daily in my life.

Is that not a healing too?

Someone, somewhere, has probably researched and written a paper costing a fortune on why chewing gum loses its flavour, but for me the healing question simply has no answer.

We all are asking questions at the moment but most could be summed up with the word 'Why?', and not even as questions but outpourings of prayerful anguish, needing to be expressed. They need to be responded to, as with any kind of distress, with the embrace of love and the tenderness of empathy.

Our faith encourages us at times to live with the unanswerable and the unanswered – that is what faith is about, leaving space for God to work.

So as we read a story about healing and are frustrated or angry or doubtful per-

haps our tasks as healers is like Jesus, to offer presence to those who suffer or struggle. Our task is to encourage each other to hang on because redemption is near and to create a church community where those who are weak and wounded feel just much a part of the community as others.

People often ask me to look at why different, more evangelical congregations are growing with youngsters. There are many answers to this and there may be unanswered ones too but I believe there is an even greater testimony to faith to see those with worries and weaknesses still having the willpower to display their faith. You could look at Captain Sir Tom Moore that way too – a man at the end of his life, walking frame in front, displaying courage and a determination to make tomorrow a better day.

Is that not healing too?

'Oh me, oh my, oh you,

Whatever shall I do?

Hallelujah,

the question is peculiar

I'd give it a lot of dough

if only I could know

the answer to my question,

is it yes or is it no?

Does your chewing gum lose its flavour? `

Does your faith? Can you live with the tension of living in a broken world and realise that the answer is the Man of Brokenness, that God through him, his ministry and miracles, his suffering and death, will bring healing, healing to us all?

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

(We make our offerings of body, mind and soul, as well as in a monetary way.)

OFFERTORY PRAYER

You lift us to our feet so we can walk with you, Loving God,
and you fill us with your gifts

so we may pour them out for those around us.

Take what we offer

and use them in that kingdom work

which strengthens the weary,

feeds the hungry,

and gives hope to the despairing. AMEN

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Lord Jesus Christ,
when you walked on dusty roads
or sat by glistening waters,
you met people where they were.

When you bent down low to touch the leper,
or raised your eyes to touch Zacchaeus' heart,
heaven and earth were met.

And so our prayer today
is that our world will know your healing touch
and your forgiving heart.
That those who have been hurt
by insincere actions and damning words
will hear your healing voice.
That those whose lives
are filled with dark thoughts,
or unimaginable fears,
will know your peace.
Walk beside those
who are close to giving up hope
and where life seems to have no point:
where people struggle to make ends meet
and fear the bailiffs' knock on the door.
May children living in sewers
or tending parents with the after affects of war
feel the touch of a caring hand
and an end to injustice and fear.
And may all who weep and mourn,
or feel abandoned and unloved
turn towards your voice,
move towards your arms
and hear the whisper of your presence
in the long hours of night.
Inspire us and encourage us to bend down low,
to embrace those for whom society has no time or patience.
Raise our eyes upwards to see the struggling patient
and the exhausted care giver.
And where young and old stumble and fall,
may we be there to offer support,
that all will know your love that transcends all others,
a love that brings healing and peace.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. AMEN

SENDING HYMN

BENEDICTION

May you find grace in the moments you need it most.
May renewal bind itself around you and lead you on.
May you hear the word speak your name into every silence.
And may God fill you with the possibilities you bring to the world.

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