



Broomhill Hyndland
Parish Church

"Lighting the Way"

for Sunday 28 February 2021

Dear friends,

Welcome to another Sunday service, on the Second Sunday in Lent.

In Florence's Uffizi Gallery on the way to David, Michelangelo's masterpiece, you pass among unfinished sculpture works by the same artist. They are called Prigionieri, the prisoners, the captives. Intended to adorn the tomb of Pope Julius II these sculptures were put on hold so Michelangelo could work on painting the Sistine Chapel. They were never finished. So the figures are not completely formed. It is as if they have not fully emerged from the stone around them. Michelangelo spoke about how when he was making a sculpture he could see the figure as it would be when it was complete - his job was to set the figure free.

A similar gift was given to Peter, James and John on the mountain, through the transfiguration of Christ in all his splendour. They witness humanity's future in him.

Whilst in Lent we look inwardly, I always think of the Prigionieri because it reminds me, in my journey, that God is not finished with me yet. I am not the finished article: there is much learning still to be done in both my life and my faith, to be the person that God intends, would like, or encourages me to be.

The Prigionieri also reminds me of the words of that great hymn, 'Make me a captive, Lord, and then I shall be free.' Lent asks us what we are captive to, what takes our time and fills our days, for these things slow us down and distract us from the task in hand of following Jesus, taking up our cross and travelling to the hill outside Jerusalem.

Enjoy today's service, journey on and walk with Nigel, Nickie and Ryan, as many of you have done, from Nigel's Mum's funeral last week.

Every blessing,

George

Sunday 28 February - Lent 2 (Year B)

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 17: 1-7, 15-16; Psalm 22: 23-31; Romans 4: 13-25; Mark 8: 31-38

For those who miss the hymns I have added them in here.

Sunday's hymns are:

162 The God of Abraham praise; CH3 81 My faith looks up to thee; 402 Take up your cross; 644 O Jesus I have promised to serve thee to the end.

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 Genesis 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

(Let us say our call together today. Respond in the **bold**.)

Let us turn our minds from human things.

Our faith in Jesus saves us.

Let us set our minds on divine things.

Our faith in Jesus saves us.

We will deny ourselves and take up our cross.

Our faith in Jesus saves us.

We will lose all; that we may gain all.

Our faith in Jesus saves us.

MUSIC FROM RAZVAN

PRAYER OF APPROACH

'Cross my heart and hope to die', the child says,
making an unbroken bond to her friend.

'Do you promise to tell the truth, the whole truth,
so help you God?', a question from the courtroom.

'Do you take this man as your beloved husband?'
the minister asks the bride on the chancel steps.

Promises, promises, of childhood friendship,
to the law of the land, to a couple on a new journey.

Almighty Father,

you chose an aged couple to parent your holy people,
and you call us to set aside ourselves and to shoulder a cross.

And we promise, we promise to serve you to the end.

But to the end of what?

We stumble and fall well before the Golgotha road,
our endings are different from yours – the end of worship-

the end of an answered or unanswered prayer?

when the church has served our purposes?

Lord, on your way to Jerusalem help us take seriously your call to follow.

God of Sarah and Abraham, in these holy places and moments

we know how weak our discipleship is.

Hours on this and that or the other but a fleeting moment of time to you.

We seek quick fixes to our problems

rather than seeking to see the vision and future you have for our lives.

Forgive us, our lack of trust, our faithless living,

closing our ears to the call of Christ.

May we take the life you offer up to us

and make that a childhood action come true –

'Cross my heart and hope to die.'

That's a promise of true discipleship !!

(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 Genesis 17:1-7, 15-19
'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

Dear Lord, help us to expect miracles. Help us to get past the borders of our eyes, the roadblocks of our mind, the narrow door of our heart. May our soul embrace the mystery of your love. May our heart rejoice over the unexpected and undefined.

REFLECTION

I need to stop looking at Facebook for Lent!

I keep coming across these pages that ask you to remember from the 1960's and 1970's. 'Choose one,' they say, and in front of my face are biscuits from childhood!

Will I choose a Bourbon or a Nice biscuit?

Will I go for a fig roll that Pam hates, or a Lemon Puff which she hates even more, or the old standard custard cream? What about a Garibaldi biscuit, famous for Italian Unification and the fact that I once had a gerbil with the same name!!

Then a page moves to chocolate. What is your favourite chocolate, the page asks and I go through the whole rigmarole again, choosing between a Marathon and a Fry's Cream that had different flavoured segments not just the traditional mint! And then there was a favourite of my mother-in-law's – Fry's Turkish Delight, 'full of Eastern Promise', the advert claimed all those years ago.

How are you on promises?

Last Sunday I told you about temptations, and some personal ones at that!

What about you: is there a temptation to break a promise? Throughout this pandemic politicians have been accused, probably rightly and justifiably, of breaking their promises, particularly when it comes down to opening and closing schools, hospitality and places of worship.

And now, as lockdown seems to be easing and perhaps we have a grip on this virus, we are told that worship buildings may open on Easter Monday!! Promises, promises!!

In the story from Genesis, we encounter the story of Abram and Sarai which

really begins in chapter 12. Abram is 75 years old when God tells him to pack up and leave and to follow where God leads. As part of that invitation, God makes a promise. He promises that they will be parents of a nation!

Abram and Sarai have never had any children, so this brings great joy to their hearts. As we continue to read on in Genesis, God keeps repeating His promise – in chapter 13 and in chapter 15 God continues to promise that they will have descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky.

But, by chapter 16, they've heard it all before and it seems even to them, that God might not keep His promise. 'Look at our age,' you can hear them say, 'we're not getting any younger,' and they become so frustrated with the idea in their heads of playing on the floor with their children and being unable to get up again, they take matters into their own hands.

'Promises, promises,' they say, 'God is full of heavenly promises!'

So, annoyed at the time-line being moved (sounds familiar), Sarai suggests that Abram should become intimate with Hagar: it's the only way they are going to have a child!

But God intervenes and repeats His promise – you will have descendants.

Here in chapter 17, what is God doing? Yes, He's still full of Eastern Promise!! 'I am God, I will make a covenant with you, you will have many descendants, Sarai, you will bear a son.'

For 5 chapters God keeps on repeating His promises and in the end, Abram and Sarai's names are changed to Abraham and Sarah: Abraham, 'father of multitude,' Sarah 'princess of many.'

God promises – but they doubt.

God promises – so they ask Hagar and think about Ishmael as their heir.

God promises and keeps on repeating Himself.

When they put their fears aside and listen to the authentic voice of God, not the voices troubling their minds, rather than panicking, they respond and remember what God can do. In the following chapter, God will send messengers with the announcement that the birth is imminent.

God promises. God carries out with His promises. God can be trusted.

It's Lenten time and we need to remember God keeps his promises. He has sent his son, fulfilling his promises through the prophets, and throughout His ministry Jesus continues to make promises, promises that will change our very being, as they did to Abram and Sarai all those years ago.

In this pandemic, who or what have we listened to? - our fears, our worries, the news that's not good news, the u-turns of politicians, the promises given and broken of opening up and getting closer to the ones we love and are dear to our hearts?

Or Jesus?

'Come to me, you that have heavy burdens.' A promise.

'Remain with me, I will remain in you.' A promise.

'The Son of Man will be crucified and rise on the third day.' A promise.

'I will be with you always.' An Eastern promise.

As we journey through Lent, hold on to the promises and the man who means what he says. I promise you, that's the way.

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

AMEN

OFFERTORY PRAYER

God of all, you love us and have claimed us.

As you blessed Sarah and Abraham,
you have invited us into the blessing of connection
within the family of humanity whom you continue to bless.

We give our offerings in celebration of the depths of our blessing
and pray that they will strengthen the church across the world
to bless all your children.

In the holy name of Christ, our Saviour and Redeemer, we pray in gratitude.
AMEN

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Faithful God, we thank You because You are true,
You are light and in You there is no darkness at all.
You are ever to be trusted, and constant is Your love.

As we remember how the path Jesus took
brought Him into conflict with those who were thirled to other ways,
we are thankful that He never gave up,
nor allowed Himself to be diverted from His purpose.

Jesus remained true to His mission, proclaiming Your kingdom had come,
with good news for the poor, release for the captives,
recovery of sight for the blind and freedom for the oppressed.

From our hearts we thank You
for the height and depth, the length and breadth of Christ's love,
when on a cross with outstretched arms He embraced us all.

Thank You for the great hope we have that because Christ is risen,
one day there will be no more death, or crying or pain,
that nations shall beat their swords into ploughshares
and not learn war any more.

God of grace, trusting in Your promises, confident of Your love,
we bring our prayers for others to You today.

Crucified, Risen and Ascended Lord Jesus,
You bring before the throne of God our prayers and concerns:
there, You are our advocate and that of our sisters and brothers -
people who are hungry, remembering the increased use of food banks
and the rise of food poverty in our country,
giving thanks for initiatives that ensure meals are provided for children.

Some people are homeless, without shelter or adequate clothing.
We think of how varied their circumstances
have been during this time of Coronavirus.

We remember the work of care vans, shelters,
charities and all who help people out of homelessness.

Many people face times of hardship in these days;
people whose jobs have gone, businesses facing collapse;
families worried about paying the rent or mortgage.
We think of initiatives designed to offer support
and remember those in government, local and national,
whose decisions affect the lives of many.

People are unwell or mentally distressed at this time
because of Coronavirus or other illnesses,
whether at home or in hospital.

Let us also remember all who care,
giving thanks for their dedication and skills,
thankful for the work of scientists
and those in charge of the logistics as they make vaccines available,
remembering especially people in poorer nations.

Let us also take some moments
to bring the private prayers of our hearts,
letting our cry come to God, knowing that God is listening.

These prayers we offer to You, God of Grace, God of Promises kept.
By the strength Your Spirit gives,
may we journey with Jesus into life in all its fullness,
that Your Kingdom of love and justice
may be known all the more among us and in Your world,
And that many may see Jesus in all His glory.
AMEN

SENDING HYMN

BENEDICTION

May we find the road that leads to life;
may we take the turns that brings right relationships;
may we pause to accompany others on the way;
and may we journey with God through Lent,
and long for the horizon and dawn.

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

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