



**Broomhill Hyndland
Parish Church**

“Lighting the Way”

for **Sunday 29 August 2021**

Dear friends, welcome to another time of worship.

I will look back one day and remember fondly the applause that was given to Junior Church as they stepped into the Sanctuary last Sunday. Wasn't it great to see them in the front rows once more! The children are choosing a hymn to be sung each Sunday based on their tastes and as an experiment to help them realise the importance of the Lord's Prayer, I've separated the Lord's Prayer from what we know as the Prayer of Approach, to encourage the youngsters' contributions.

The Church was fuller again: thank you, even with some restrictions we are worshipping more and more numerically than what we had been used to. As Razvan said to me recently, Broomhill Hyndland are a good singing congregation! Yes, even with a mask on we can still make a noise.

World-wise, the Afghan situation is deepening, so please keep the country in your prayers. Similarly in your prayers, please remember the family of Alexa Walker, whose funeral took place on Friday past, and Robert Limond's, the date in which has still to be finalised.

This coming Wednesday, WD40 have their 2pm service and on Friday 3rd September, the BB returns. Now that we are almost in September, our proposed Harvest Sunday will probably be Sunday 12th. Approaching also will be our Kirk Session meeting in September.

I wish you every blessing,

George

Church Magazines for September are now available.

Sunday 29 August – Pentecost 14 (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: Song of Songs 2: 8-13; Psalm 42: 1-2, 6-9; Psalm 15; Deuteronomy 4: 1-2, 6-8; James 1: 17-27; Mark 7: 1-8, 14-15, 21-23.

Sunday's hymns are: 192 All my hope on God is founded; 144 I love the sun; 553 Just as I am; 464 Though hope desert my heart; 264 Judge Eternal

Our Sunday reflection will be based on James and 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

Come as a child
before the great King ...
King above all kings ...
Ruler of the world.

Come with an open heart
and a reverent spirit
to worship
and to give thanks.

Come with a humble heart
before the throne of grace
and listen
for the voice of God to speak.

PRAYER OF APPROACH AND LORD'S PRAYER

Light-giving God:
our praises spring up like flowers on a spring day;
our songs of joy are lifted to you;
our hearts overflow with your kindness and generosity.

Jesus, Son and Saviour:
you look through the lattice of the world
at our lives,
our hearts, our souls.
You speak to us with tenderness and strength,
calling us to come away from rigid legalism to lives of grace and hope.

Truth-speaking Spirit:
we look in a mirror and see God's child;
we walk away and forget whose we are.
Move within us and reshape us into God's beloved children,
living within that circle of blessing called the kingdom.
Lord God,
we hear your words every day but rarely live them out.
Sometimes our anger rises like Mount Vesuvius
but our forgiveness drips like a rusty tap.
Our impetuous tongues rush to judgement
whilst our words of hope are on pause.
Father of Light and Love,
may your mercy fall on us like a summer shower on parched grass;
may your hope overflow our hearts and may Christ speak to us again
and call us to life.

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 particularly in James and Mark.

'This is the Word of God. Thanks be to Him.'

And now a hymn. Choose one from our opening page.

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Gracious God, may your messages come to us through the Holy Spirit's power, so that our faith does not rest on the articulation of words, or the acumen of the human mind, but upon your power and presence. Help us never to depend on our own might and power but always upon your Spirit. AMEN

REFLECTION

Kyogo Furuhashi, the Japanese Celtic player, allegedly, on a rival supporter's bus, has been racially abused, to the words 'Let's all do the Kyogo', with some fans pulling their eyes to the side. Rangers Football Club will ban them but what came to mind was the phrase, 'tarring everyone with the same brush.'

Just because some football fans found it amusing to mock a culture does not mean the whole Club fall into the same category. We shouldn't, 'tar everyone with the same brush.'

I got out my car one day and a man stopped me and asked me if I was a priest. Before I got a chance to answer, he shared with me what he thought about the Catholic Church, the hierarchy, the money stored in Rome and the abuse that happens behind closed doors. 'What do you say do that?' he asked after his rant. 'Oh, I am Church of Scotland,' I answered.

Whilst being pleased at my smart-ass response, again I wondered why those in the Roman Catholic faith were also being tarred with the same brush. I am not for one minute being frivolous in my approach to these incidents, but what intrigues me is how a judgement is being made on the whole based on the actions of a few.

It is often thrown in our face: the general scandal that Christians fall short of the standards they commend to others. God gave the Commandments to the Israelites, as we heard in our first reading and in lesser and greater ways, Christians disobey them.

Thus the danger, as with the chat with the children last week about wearing 'your heart on your sleeve' - if you slip up, in an observer's eyes, it doesn't just impinge on you, as a person, but on the institution and on the belief system as a whole.



All of us who espouse the gospel are aware of a disparity between who we are and who we wish to be. Increasingly each of us is being called to engage with the people of our secularised society as witnesses who proclaim in word and deed our hope in Jesus, our Risen Saviour. Being a witness necessarily involves us drawing attention to ourselves. And it is in that moment that we can wince, because of our awareness of our chequered personal history and because of patterns of actual sin which we have not found the courage to address.

Interestingly, others, perhaps with no faith, are also quite happy to comment on the gulf between who we are as humans as we try to live up to that faith.

I remember playing football against my brother in Shawlands. His frustration on being unable to take the ball from my feet led to a meaty tackle. Before we knew it, it was fisty-cuffs, (really handbags at dawn) and both of us were sent-off. That was fine – I had been sent off before and it would happen again, but it was the comment that struck harder than my brother's namby-pamby swing – 'That's a terrible way for Christians to behave!'

The whole of the National Church and the whole of Christendom, in heaven and on earth, were being questioned !! 'Tarred with the same brush', I think!

I sometimes seek solace through thinking to myself 'Well, I may be bad, but I'm not as bad as so-and-so' and then I recall ways in which this other may have erred. But then I read the passage from James that reminds me of a mirror and that won't do. In those moments I am aligning myself with the Pharisees whom Jesus admonishes so strongly in today's gospel. And I know why I fall into being judgmental: for as long as I concentrate on others' faults, I don't need to address my own.

So what do you do? So what do we do? What do we do as a Church when mission has become once more, as it should always have been, a priority? Run away and hide? Do that and it means we have failed to act as witnesses to this generation. How can we witness, making mistakes along the way, and not be judged by these mistakes nor let it taint who we are as people?

For the Pharisees the answer was quite simple - the solution was to protect the sacred. And in order to maintain a purity culture and not contaminate or stain their religion, they practiced rituals down to the last letter. They can refuse the unwashed. They can decide who is 'out' and who is 'in.' They can refuse entry to the morally corrupt.

Jesus doesn't admonish them for the criticism of hand-washing. He doesn't criticise the religious rituals, or that religious tradition is wrong, but he asks them about their legalism and exclusivism that shuts people out.

They want to protect themselves so much, to stop others who don't qualify upsetting the apple-cart and tarring them with the same brush.

How do you witness the faith you have when you know that, hanging over your head, is the fact that you might let others down?

One of the answers is to recognise that we are not the finished product with nothing to learn from the Holy Spirit. This is where the judgement of others is so wrong. They fail to see that we are a work in progress and when someone falls from grace, we are all the same.

It is a difficult one, a two-edged sword, for if we put on piety for others to applaud we are harangued and if we show the hidden depths of our souls, our fears and fixations, we are also criticised for not practicing what we preach.

When, in today's gospel, Jesus lists all those aspects of the darkness of our hearts which rob us of joy, we have to remember that he is on our side. He is

inviting us to identify which are the false avenues which we have gone down in our search for happiness. He allows us to name them for ourselves and then to turn to him so that we may acknowledge in an informed way that we are indeed sinners standing in need of the forgiveness of our Father in heaven. And we know in faith that it is sufficient for us to ask for pardon quickly to be granted to us.

We know that God knows what comes from the heart, from the inside...

... and here is the thing, he doesn't make judgements on us, nor 'tar us together on the one brush'!!

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. AMEN

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Giving God,

We give you thanks and praise for all of your gifts to us.

We know that you are the source of every good thing:
light and love come from you.

You have created us,

and you continue to breathe life into us through the power of your Holy Spirit.

You have given us so much,

and it is because we recognize the gifts you have given to us
that we now give to the work of your kingdom.

We now dedicate this offering

to the work of your kingdom here on earth.

May this collection be used wisely and diligently,
that your love may be known widely.

As we dedicate this offering, we offer ourselves too,
for these gifts of money are but tokens of ourselves.

Take and use us, that our hands may reach out in service,

our feet may walk the difficult path of reconciliation,

and that our words may be words of peace.

For this we pray in the name of Jesus. AMEN

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

The law is easy, Jesus: lists to be made,
items ticked as each is fulfilled.

Love is messy: people to be heard and seen,
consequences and compassion to be considered.

But we've lived too long by law and still do
as we pray for our world this day -

the law of the sword

taking lives to achieve our goals;

the law of the market

seeking gain without thought of the impact:

the law of religion

handing out judgement in your name.

But, the poor and the weak,

the diseased and the lonely,
the rejected and the sinful
find no healing in our laws.
Those displaced,
marginalised,
searching for a safe place to lay their head,
they find no succour in the words of the political,
the war games that leaders play,
the laws and lives that suit the minority.

So teach us to love, Jesus, as you do:
enough to defend the helpless
and overturn the tables of the powerful;
enough to sacrifice ourselves
so others may live.
That's love Lord:
a love so great
that extends the time to let others flee;
a love so great
that it sends people in to help
rather than abandon;
a love so great
that it looks at what it has
and shares it out.
It is easy to pass judgement, Lord:
to stick to the rules.
But that's not love.
Teach us to love, Jesus, as you do. AMEN

BENEDICTION

May bells ring
and organs play
and voices hymn
and joy be found
whenever the mould
forming on the world
is broken by love.
Go in Peace, and May the Blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and
the Holy Spirit, be with you all. AMEN