



Broomhill Hyndland
Parish Church

"Lighting the Way"

for **Sunday 18 October 2020**

Dear friends

Welcome to another Sunday service in the Sanctuary, by Zoom or by sitting reading the Reflections by the fireside - and boy, do we need the fireside as the temperature begins to drop!

Can I draw your attention away from the fireside, further away to other parts of the world. Many parts of the world not only have continual endemic problems whether of war, violence, poverty, persecution, displacement etc, but are also increasingly affected by Covid. You will all remember that our Christian Aid Plant Sale did not take place, nor did other Christian Aid events. With this in mind the Western District of Christian Aid are proposing that November be the Month of Appeal - not just for prayers which they appreciate but also donations.

We all are aware of the situation here with Covid but Christian Aid are asking you to be doubly aware of the difficulties in other parts of the world. Don Swanson will keep you updated but remember that many meaningful charity events have not taken place and we have a responsibility for all of God's Creation. Keep this in mind and your eye on how we can support Christian Aid both near at hand and in distant lands.

Back to local issues - and a good number of face visors have been donated, thanks to Robin and Carol MacDougall, for the personal and exclusive use of the congregation. Whilst wearing your own face coverings is our own clear preference, we know there are some who are having difficulties either practically or medically being able to wear a mask. As we want as many members to feel comfortable returning to Church on a Sunday morning we will make these available in the vestibule, beside the hand sanitisers, for your exclusive use, from this Sunday 18th October. If you take one please take it home for your use in the future, we hope not to find any left behind in the Sanctuary.

Last week John McLintock's funeral took place and we remember his family at this time. Likewise Nan Blackstone's funeral takes place on Monday at Maryhill Crematorium at 3.45 - the usual restrictions in place.

I am pleased to say the fortnightly WD40 service returns this Wednesday (21 October) at 2pm.

The rules that apply to our Naseby service are applicable here.

Thinking of you all,

George

Pentecost 21A Sunday 18 October 20 (Proper 24)

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: Exodus 33: 12-23; Isaiah 45: 1-7; Psalm 99; 1 Thessalonians 1: 1-10; Matthew 22: 15-22.

For those who miss the hymns I have added them in here. The congregation in Naseby, 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. It also gives me the chance to 'slip in' some newer ones so that we can learn them for the future!!

This Sunday's hymns are:

497 Almighty Father of all things that be; 501 Take this moment; 180 Give thanks with a grateful heart; 504 Two little fishes and 502 Take my life.

Get your hymn books out and sing in your own home as we did with 'Ye Gates' at Communion!!

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...

CALL

The earth has its kings, but God is ruler of all.

Praise God above all, the giver of life!

The mountains may tremble, the oceans may roar,
but God's presence is more powerful than the earth itself.

Come into God's presence, for God is among us now.

O God, show us your glory; we seek your ways.

Come to the Rock, the God of life,

for God is present now.

INTROIT

Peter and John went to pray,

They met a lame man on the way.

He asked for alms and he held out his palms,

And this is what Peter did say:

'Silver and gold have I none,

But such as I have I give to thee,

In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,

Rise up and walk! `

He went walking and leaping and praising God,

Walking and leaping and praising God,

'In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,

Rise up and walk! `

(MP 199)

PRAYER

God of mercy,

we place our trust in tangible things -

things we can see and touch -

and question whether you are really there.

Forgive us, Holy One,

when we fail to recognise that you are always nearby,

patiently waiting for us to recognise your presence and your glory.

Help us when we lose our way,

and forgive us when we forget to whom we truly belong.
For many years we have had the mistaken notion
that all the problems of the world can be solved with a few pounds.
In Jesus' time the Pharisees came to ask him if they should pay taxes,
and Jesus, looking at a silver coin,
asked whose face and name were engraved on it.
"The Emperor's," they said.
"Well then, pay to the Emperor what is his" Jesus replied.

Has God's face ever been on a coin?
We are the coin that bears the living likeness of God.
Giving of ourselves, with whatever that may include,
is the only legal currency of the kingdom of heaven.

Lover of justice,
open our eyes to see you;
open our ears to hear you;
open our hearts to love you;
and open our hands to serve you.

In his name we pray ...
Our Father, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done
on earth as 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

And now we turn to Scripture from Matthew 22: 15-22
Let us listen, read and hear the Word of God ...
... this is the Word of the Lord, thanks be to Him.

MUSICAL INTERLUDE

ILLUMINATION

Mighty God, you spoke to your people in a pillar of cloud as they walked together in the wilderness. Speak to us through your Word today, that we may hear you calling us out of the wilderness places of our lives and into the new places you have promised to show us. In the name of Christ, we pray. AMEN

REFLECTION

Here is a profound question that will challenge you.

Is a Jaffa Cake a cake or a biscuit? It looks like a biscuit, is shaped like a biscuit and it is packaged like a biscuit and it sits in the biscuit aisle, so why is it called a cake?



This has kept me awake at night! When I do nod off, I'm rolling back and forward saying out loud 'Cake, no, biscuit; cake no biscuit' so that Pam has got up and raided the cupboard.

But it was the VAT man who kind of solved the problem. He/she charges VAT on biscuits but not on cakes and wished to claim the sums from McVities. They went to court and McVities won – so here you are, hearing it from the pulpit, ... the Gospel truth...

Jaffa cakes are (drum roll)... cakes!

Why? The bottom part is a sponge but the scientific part is this – when biscuits go stale, they soften; when cakes go stale they harden. Jaffa cakes? They harden!!

Cake or a biscuit?

Cafe or a restaurant?

A tomato – fruit or vegetable?

It's one or the other. Why our Scottish government is getting confused is a mystery to me!

And it is one or the other with our Matthew reading today.

The choice is between Caesar or God, between the ruling authorities and those who claimed godly faithfulness. We know the story well. A coin is shown to Jesus in the hope of ensnaring him – choose one way and those who have followed and listened to his words would be upset: choose the other way and Jesus could be accused as a revolutionary, challenging the power of the Roman regime.

All based on a flip of a coin.

Heads or tails? Caesar or God? Cake or biscuit? Cafe or restaurant?

Jesus, on the ball, seeing the cul-de-sac question as a danger, replies, 'Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and God to God.'

To me, the choice is not one or the other. We cannot, we should not draw a firm line between the faith we profess and the world we belong in. Yes, we belong to the kingdom and are citizens of heaven, yes, we are in the world but not of the world, however the two belong together.

This is not an injunction to do as little as possible for civil authority and in all other matters keep yourself apart – it is the exact opposite. Our faith is not a private thing. We should be using our faith as the driving force to change the world and make this world a better place. Keeping religion, for example, out of politics, does not wash with me, and it doesn't wash with Jesus either.

In a world where people have received authority with violence; where there is chaos and no authority to deal with disease; where competition brings strife to a peaceful city; where freedoms are ignored and people treated unequally and unfairly, in these examples of Caesar's world, there, the Christian should be.

We can't isolate our political choices and actions, our worldly choices and actions, as if they have nothing to do with God and separate him from them. What does belong to God? If everything belongs to God it's his world, it is his children, then the spiritual and the political must cohere not contradict each other.

You cannot claim one thing on a Sunday morning during worship and say, 'Amen' to it and then ignore your declarations from the pew the rest of the week. You cannot claim you believe in this or that and then vote politically to

suit yourself. Our 'giving to Caesar' must be influenced by what our 'giving is to God.'

That is why Christians are sometimes called hypocritical—we preach humility, sacrifice, surrender and love; we claim that the suffering of another will not go unnoticed, that the broken-hearted will be comforted but choose what is more expedient.

For me, I have always liked our Church of Scotland Magazine 'Life and Work' because it is like the choice of cafe or restaurant, Jaffa cake or biscuit. We need both the 'life' and the 'work'. How much does your compassion and humility as a Christian influence how you vote in an election or embrace your brother or sister.

We are all aware of the Scottish politician who travelled up and down to Westminster while Covid positive. Interestingly she went to church as well. Where does her faith take her after her actions where many have encouraged her to resign?

What would you have done?

On my phone, reading the news, some people have developed an app which gives out the wrong details so that you cannot be tracked and traced.

How does that sit with Caesar and God?

Faith and following is not a Sunday exercise. It is not an hour of private and personal devotion to make you feel better before you enter the world once more. Remember, we are encouraged to 'read, recite perhaps, reflect ... and then respond.'

Our challenge in the church is to show in our communities that we belong together. We need to practice our faith and our politics whether we like the UK government, the Scottish Government, the leader in the White House or not – reflecting and responding to who God is.

Our first loyalty should always be to the kingdom that will last and remain longer after the earthly empires rise and fall. Caesar's reign and realm was temporal and limited. As a church we should be building that which lasts, not that which suits us and gets us by in a temporary nature. I know you know this is a bugbear of mine but we have invested so much time and energy to complying with regulations on our buildings to cope with Covid and to get those who rent our halls back. I see the necessity of the first but not the second.

The mistake we might make in an attempt to re-dress the financial pressures is to go back to where we were. Is that not Caesar's rather than God's way?

This is a challenge we need to be grown up about.

What are we trying to do – satisfy the world, or please the God whom we have promised to serve? My fear is that we might make a backward step. By filling up so many buildings we are not giving God what is God's.

Cake or biscuit?

Cafe or restaurant?

Building a building or building a church?

God's reign is eternal. Give to God what is God's. Give him everything.

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

PRAYER

We seem to have lost the ability to see glory, God;
We look at money, notes or coins;
or medals, last-person-standing triumphs,
and exclusive, only-for-the-privileged-few accolades,
and we call these glorious,
forgetting how they tarnish after just a few moments.
We look at cup-holders, victory marches,
Babylonian-type towers that reach to the sky,
forgetting with winners there will be losers, recurring defeats,
and structures and kingdoms that fall to dust.

We have forgotten how to recognise the glory that lives -
in the sacrifices of a mother
for whom feeding a child takes monumental effort each day;
in the compassion of a stranger
who gives his time and talent to care for sick and dying souls;
in the humility of a well-qualified professional
who uses her connections and skill to ensure the success
of small projects that bring life to the least;
in the courage of a peace-maker
who stands empty-handed against tanks and bombs,
or who chooses to serve and love an enemy;

Open our eyes to the glory all around us,
the glory of crosses and opened graves in hopeless situations;
the glory of your presence and creativity in dark and ugly and fearful places;

And teach us to be both heralds and couriers of this glory,
so that it may be seen to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.
AMEN

BENEDICTION

Go now as those who have found favour in the sight of God.
Be imitators of Jesus Christ and an example to all of the life of faith.
To the world in which you live, give your love and service,
and to God, give all that you are and all that you shall be.

And may the glory of God's goodness be revealed to you;
May the grace and peace of Jesus Christ take root in you;
And may the inspiration of the Holy Spirit fill you with joy.