



**Broomhill Hyndland
Parish Church**

“Lighting the Way”

for **Sunday 4 July 2021**

Dear Friends, welcome to another Sunday worship and - the month of July. Many thanks to the support shown last Sunday to Daniel when he was baptised, and also to the work behind the scenes for Robert Hynd, who as Moderator of the Presbytery, led the Candidates' Graduation Ceremony last Wednesday.

As I mentioned last Sunday, people send me messages on my phone bringing a little laughter and cheer. The most recent message suggested that if the 'minister and the organist' played football up and down the aisle, like at a football match, we could pack more members in and sing as loud as we want! There's a thought!

As the Manse family try to relax for a couple of weeks (singing 'We're on the road to Nowhere!') can I wish you every blessing. A little reminder that the Lodging House Mission are still looking for volunteers to help. Contact Alistair Beattie if you would like more information.

George

***Bookings for 11 July are open next Friday from 10am until 3pm.
Telephone 07851 591 503. Each week thereafter please phone to book.
Although seats should be available, we still need your details for the
Scottish Government's Test and Protect.***

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

5 July - 21 July Minister's Holidays

11 July Morning Worship led by John Boyle

18 July Morning Worship led by Mat Morton

(Pastoral cover – in the first instance, as always, our Session Clerk. Presbytery are aware of the Minister's holidays and the Revd Tim Sinclair of Partick Trinity will help out if he can.)

Sunday 4 July – Pentecost 6 (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: 2 Samuel 5: 1-5, 9-10; Psalm 48; Psalm 123; Ezekiel 2: 1-5; 2 Corinthians 12: 1-10; Mark 6: 1-13.

Sunday's hymns are: 466 Before the throne of God above; 490 Jesus, lover of my soul; 555 Amazing Grace; 457 All hail the power of Jesus' Name.

Our Sunday reflection will be based on 2 Corinthians 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

M Take off your shoes!

C We are standing on holy ground.

M Shake off the dust!

C We are ready to start afresh.

M Let us worship God and receive Christ's teachings,
that we may be renewed and strengthened
to share God's love with the world.

PRAYER OF APPROACH AND LORD'S PRAYER

We thank you, loving God, for the surprises which you spring on us!
You take the unlovely and cherish them, the mediocre and make them gifted,
the mere nobodies and ordain them your apostles.

You surprise us, loving God, that the message you wish proclaimed,
the kingdom you wish to build,
the Good News you wish to share that Christ became one of us,
is in the hands of us gathered here –
the hands and feet in our community.

You entrust us with an authority and ministry
far beyond our own strength.

We are reticent.

Yet under your patient care
we discover that all things are possible to those who love you.

So when your plans seem to be rejected,
your projects ignored, belittled, made unwelcome,
help us trust in you, called as we are to be prophets.
Fill us with your Spirit and support us with your gentle hands
that we may persevere in speaking your word,
living your life,
surprising others of the joy that is shared by knowing you.

Surprise us again, loving Friend.

Surprise us with the Christ who believes in us
and the grace which is made perfect in human weakness.

(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, in 2 Corinthians 12: 1 - 10
'This is the Word of God. Thanks be to Him.'

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

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on us this morning. Move through our midst and transform our hearts with the peace and hope of the reigning Christ. Gathered in your Divine presence, may we boldly worship your Holy Name, and in doing so, may we receive the mercy and grace that sustains, now and always.
AMEN

REFLECTION

I cannot watch Andy Murray any more!

There I was, sitting down in the Manse with a cup of brew and the score at Wimbledon reached two sets to nil, 5 games to nil, in what many believed was going to be the final encounter.

Even Hawkeye, the electronic system for judging whether the ball was in or out, had gone home early. Jackets were being put on, strawberries packed away, texts sent for taxis, Andrew Castle was talking about the England Germany football game, even Judy Murray had zipped up her tracksuit top – the game was done and dusted.

But it wasn't!!

Andy, decided to be the Andy we all know and let that lead slide into a fourth set.

The Andy that frustrates me could not get his first serve in.

The Andy that annoys me tried the flicks and the slices which did not work.

The Andy that irritates me started to limp with his iron hip.

All the little niggles that make Andy Murray Andy Murray – the inability to switch off from the mistake and focus on the next point, were all clear to see and it drove me to distraction.

'People keep asking me,' he said after the end, 'is this your last match...'

I was hoping it was his last match because I cannot stand it!!

Andy has a lot of strengths but also has weaknesses too.

We live in a world where strength is seen as a beneficial attribute to have. On a CV, in an interview, the question, 'What are your strengths and weaknesses?' often catches us out. We don't want to blow our own trumpet but we also don't want to seem big-headed enough to believe that we are lacking in other areas. The farce over the past two years regarding Education highlights this – the

marks and the grades given to teenagers, the employers who will not accept that a youngster has re-sat a particular exam to raise the mark, rather than accepting they had the where-with-all and the maturity to realise where they had come down.

Paul the apostle, in Corinth, was also experiencing the same problem. He was living in a Greco-Roman world where success was the key. Paul is someone whose presentation skills are poor, who doesn't pass muster in the eyes of the Corinthians, for whom, in this up-market cosmopolitan city, oratory skills and persona are the true marks of a powerful leader. But it is the wisdom of God that Paul has found through his experiences of suffering that give him confidence. He speaks, not from worldly wisdom, but from what he knows and has seen. "I may be untrained in speech," he says, "but not in knowledge." Paul has a deep knowledge of God.

In Corinth, he seems to shoot himself in the foot. His CV lists all the failings – beaten, stoned, imprisoned, daily in danger – he emphasises these points rather than hiding them, keen to emphasise that it is not his power but the grace of God in his weakness that keeps him going.

Roman officials were expected to celebrate their achievements and many carved in stone or marble their list of accomplishments and projects as they came to the end of their time in office. Remember the beginning of Mary Beard's *Ultimate Rome: Empire Without Limit* if you saw the BBC 2 series, when she reads the words on the tomb of one of the earliest Romans: Skippio Barbartus (Beardy Skippio she calls him). "He is a strong brave man," it says, "but he's clever and wise. His appearance was as good as his virtue, he really looked the part, he really cut a dash." It ends with his conquest of part of southern Italy and the hostages he took.

That's the kind of presentation or CV the Corinthians were likely accustomed to. Paul's critics just couldn't understand a person who was prepared to be so publicly open about his humanly weakness, even if it was through this that God's power was working. Imagine applying for a job and sending in a CV full of all your failures and disasters! But Paul goes against the grain insisting that the gospel is commended by these experiences and his way of life, with its catalogue of weaknesses and suffering. He really wants to drive home to the Corinthians, so that they to know for themselves, that God's power really is made perfect in weakness.

This paradox is at the heart of our Christian faith and the pattern that Jesus gives us. He is not a power wielding leader but a crucified Messiah.

But it is in this weakness that God's power is most present. Christ death and resurrection are the pattern of all our callings.

In the constant throwing out in the Manse, I came across two items that reminded me of my teaching days in Helensburgh. The first was a note from two children who wrote this:

'Dear Mr Mackay, since we didn't know for certain that you were leaving, we only had time to buy you a Mars bar...'

The second item, bearing in mind I was an RE teacher, was a rosary bead! Yes, I had taught them well! But I still have that bead, not just for sentimental reasons but because, like our Roman Catholic brothers and sisters, it also reminds me of a Christ who suffers and in that suffering points me to the glory and the grace of God.

Like the Corinthians the message is the same for us. Through God's grace we

can make space in our own lives for Christ to dwell in us. And he is most able to do that when we let down our guard and don't rely on our own strength, however much we are programmed to do so.

Try listing the things and experiences of weakness and suffering you have experienced in your life and see where God was most present to you in those times. I am sure there will be times when you have felt Christ's presence most near and a source of wisdom and strength that you often draw on. See how that wisdom and knowledge can empower what you do now and guide you to those in a vulnerable place who need to know God's transforming grace.

Embracing weakness and vulnerability is not an abdication of responsibility or authority but a way to live that enables God to work in and through us most effectively because it means our ego and pride and desire for power don't get in the way of all God wishes to do powerfully in and through us. It is a way of life that takes us to the lowest place and keeps us connected there, so that in our own experiences of suffering we can be constant companions of others who are suffering and vulnerable, and live out our calling alongside them to be witnesses in our world, in our society and communities to the unquenchable hope of all that God can do now, and will do in the future.

It is in simplicity and vulnerability that the disciples are sent out by Jesus in the second part of our gospel reading today. They are told to 'take nothing for the journey'.

This is how we are sent.

They are sent with nothing but faith – a weakness perhaps, but also their strength. There is nothing else for them to be burdened down with: no Kirk Session Meetings; no Presbytery; no archaic buildings.

The Church, it seems to me, is in a vulnerable position. It has to get the missionary part right and we need to be sent once more but perhaps it is the vulnerability that will save us, for in the vulnerable world, in the weak world, there is God's strength.

So, though it will stress me out (written this week on Tuesday), I will watch Andy Murray again and he will annoy me again – maybe because he is reminding me, like Paul, of my weaknesses too. Besides, who wants to see a player win in a robotic way?

My grace is sufficient for you – that's Christ's promise.

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

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Holy God, who both calls us and confronts us:

the gifts we bring to you

are only a small part of multitude

we have received from your goodness.

In the depth of our being,

we know that in calling us,
what you really seek is our faith,

our belief, our conviction – our very hearts.

What you long for from us is not a trip to church
but a lifelong journey into the world
to follow Jesus with our whole being.

Forgive our unbelief, our holding back,
and lead us in the way that frees us
from the grip of the world – the way of life!
In Christ, we pray. AMEN

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Disciple and discipline –
the same root – learning, imitating,
practising the way of Jesus:
he who taught your way of life,
he who corrected his followers,
he whom you sent out of the root of Jesse.

Discipline and disciple –
a marriage of medium and message – proclaiming, confessing, forgiving,
welcoming, healing, serving as Jesus did,
whether we have to shake the dust off our shoes and move on or not;
we who often get it wrong,
we who like to take the huff,
we who are fussy about the company we keep.
Disciple and discipline, even when we feel weak,
is a recipe for freedom in the Spirit –
praying, studying, worshipping,
loving you, others, ourselves;
your children turning the other cheek,
your children sharing their resources,
your children growing from the true Vine and bearing the fruits of your Spirit.
'Take nothing with you,' you said,
Christ's presence sufficient to share, to support, to celebrate in our world. AMEN

BENEDICTION

Go now, and wherever people will hear you,
proclaim the life-changing love of God.
Do not fear your weakness,
for when you are weakest, Christ's strength is known.
Travel lightly, live simply,
and honour those who welcome the gospel.

And may God be your protection and safe haven;
May the power of Christ Jesus dwell in you;
and may the Holy Spirit be your guide forever. AMEN

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