



*the Son of Man is
Lord of the Sabbath
(Luke 6: 5)*



Giffnock: the Park Church

Sunday 12th July

Good Morning Everyone,

I hope you all have your masks to hand as we begin the story of coming out of this period of being locked down or for some more accurately locked in. Please remember the offer made by Mrs Gill Bain and Mrs Elizabeth Hutton to provide hand-made masks for any who needs one. To arrange this please phone Gill on 0141 638 0921 or Elizabeth on 0141 327 7137)

While our nation begins the story recovery and return to normal life again although it may never be the same as it was - at least not for some time to come, we thankfully can now begin to do these things that we have longed to do but couldn't. One word I think sums up this up as an example and that

Word is **"HAIRCUTS"**. At long last we can get to someone who knows how best to get the hair done, who probably has a list of appointments in waiting with many Ladies looking to get their colours done, or their 'barnet' stylised. The hair bands and clasps, etc. can go back into the drawer at long last. For many gents too that has been the story. (not the hair bands and clasps) I can tell you that our Stephen who likes his hair really short was desperate to get his clippers on my head but I had to tell him much to his disappointment, "It wuznae happennin" Interestingly the issues of quarantine for holiday makers seems to be on the mend - sort of - but the Best news of all is of course that the number of deaths and admissions to hospital with this dreadful disease has been so greatly reduced that we can begin to come out of lockdown and hopefully that begins to transmit to being able to once again meet in gathering places like churches and in anticipation of that, we began the process of the Deep Clean last week with the Church sanctuary almost complete and most of the Halls Scrubbed down and ready for disinfection. The story of that continues and we will keep you up to date with that as things develop.

I trust that for most of us the news of entering Phase 3 of the lockdown is well received and I know that for some, being able to get out

again has been a real game changer. Of course it helps that the weather is also on our side with a wee bit of Glorious sunshine for us to enjoy although I suppose the grass will welcome the fall of rain on the ground. Whatever may be the case I hope our spirits remain high and our faith remains sure and steadfast as the Boys' Brigade would say.

Today's reflection I hope helps us remember the special nature of Sunday in the routine of the week and that we remember who's day it is. The Text of Luke 6:5 gives the game away but I hope that what is written for today is something that truly does buoy the spirit and feed the soul.

As always our hope at the manse is that everyone keeps well, hale and hearty and that we know with certainty that God is with us and our future with Him is secure.

With Best Wishes

Calum D. Macdonald

Please Note :

***Wilma and I will be taking some time off next week
the office therefore WILL BE CLOSED FROM***

Tuesday 14th - 21st July

Our Next Sunday Reflection will be given on

Sunday 26th July

***Should there be any need of Pastoral Assistance
during that period then you should contact the Rev Jim***

Gemmell of Carnwadric Church in the first instance

Rev Jim Gemmell Telephone number 0141 390 3598

Email: JGemmell@churchofscotland.org.uk



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"I have been driven many times upon my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that of all about me seemed insufficient for that day" — *Abraham Lincoln*

A Prayer of Thanksgiving Praise and Intercession

God our Father, the Hymn writer summed things up for us when he said that we all should thank You with our Heart and Hands and Voices for the wondrous things you have done for which the world rejoices. As the Saviour took time to spend before You Gracious God, we come to you now in the quietness of the moment and quietness of our Homes, to seek your face once more that we might again give thanks with a grateful heart for your sovereign grace and sustaining power to keep us and guard over us.

In these moments that we are driven to our knees helps us to rediscover again the marvel of your love for us, to rediscover the capacity of faith to sustain us and that sense of your ever abiding presence with us at all times and in every situation. Forgive us when in the darker moments of life that we falter in our trust of you, that we are drawn away by the things that distracts us from You and that at times we are all too easily prepared to walk away from the path that You have set.

Help us to see again in the example of Your Son, our Lord and Saviour how we should live for You and how we should love others the way that You have loved us. We pray that your indwelling Spirit at work within us might challenge us, encourage us and remind us constantly of your ever available Grace, Mercy and Forgiveness.

Be with all in our Church Family today keeping them safe and secure from the blight of illness stretching across the country and the world.

Be with those in Hospital, their families and friends who watch anxiously on. We thank you for those who have come through such a time of illness and continue to pray for those who are still going through it. Our prayer is that you would sustain them with Your Healing Power. For those who grieve this day, nurse them through this time of sadness with the hope of the Gospel and the reassurance of your Word. For those who struggle with anxiety and depression even the darker thoughts of taking their own lives or the lives of others, be near to them changing the darkness of the occasion to the Light of your love and your Word.

For those who lead the nation, remind them of the responsibilities they should have, the integrity they will require when decisions are to be made and remind them that you stand as the watchful Judge of them all seeking they do what's right. Be with our sovereign Queen and her family at this time.

As we look beyond the shores of our own nation, to all nations across the world - so many people, so many nations:

some who are at war with each other or with neighbouring states,
some who are so blighted by not just the current pandemic but by other virulent diseases wiping out communities,
Some who are persecuted for their faith in Jesus,
Some who struggle to contend with unfairness of life and death in these troubled days.

Be with them and keep them we pray, draw them to the story of the Cross and the Saviour that they may see the best way forward is a life of faith and trust in Jesus collectively as a nation and individually as a brother or sister in Christ.

As one week has passed and another week begins, On this 'the Lord's Day', we pray your blessing to continue not just upon ourselves but upon all whom we have prayed for and all whom we know this day.

In Jesus' name

Amen



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Luke 6: 1 – 10 (New International Version)

Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath

6 One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grain fields, and his disciples began to pick some heads of grain, rub them in their hands and eat the kernels. ² Some of the Pharisees asked, “Why are you doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?”

³ Jesus answered them, “Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? ⁴ He entered the house of God, and taking the consecrated bread, he ate what is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions.” ⁵ Then Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”

⁶ On another Sabbath he went into the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was shrivelled. ⁷ The Pharisees and the teachers of the law were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal on the Sabbath.

⁸ But Jesus knew what they were thinking and said to the man with the shrivelled hand, “Get up and stand in front of everyone.” So he got up and stood there.

⁹ Then Jesus said to them, “I ask you, which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?”

¹⁰ He looked around at them all, and then said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He did so, and his hand was completely restored. ¹¹ But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law were furious and began to discuss with one another what they might do to Jesus.



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Good morning,

Fifty years ago just about now, my mum and dad would have been preparing for the long journey ahead that was about to be embarked when my Dad's Holiday period from work was to begin over the Glasgow Fair. The family Car, our Ford Anglia (known better today as the Harry Potter car) would be packed to bursting with luggage and food and gifts bought for my parent's families living on the island of Lewis and Harris. This was our summer holiday which was really a pilgrimage made every year by us as a family returning to Lewis where we would then get the opportunity to catch up with our wider family on the island in the evenings while during the day, we could go fishing or head into the Town of Stornoway where the biggest store there was of Course Woolworths. The only other thing to do after that was to wander over to the Piers where you could see them offloading the fishing boats there. Sometimes my dad even got roped in to going out for an evening with his brothers where they would spend the night poaching, putting a net out on the loch and hauling it back in again so that they could enjoy the most enormous plates of freshly caught salmon and we all heartily got involved with the disposal of the evidence and I have to say we enjoyed every morsel. Life on the island moved at a very slower pace from the rest of the world. The Slowest day of the week was the Sunday which seemed to drag on forever. We lived in a caravan on my uncle's croft. We had no television, to keep us occupied and we were certainly not allowed to out to play because it was the Sabbath. The only thing you were allowed to do was to go to church and the only activity you would see on the road was in the half hour before 11am and 6.30pm cars would all be passing or people walking in the same direction as they headed for the village church. Nothing else was on the go. The shops and hostelries in the town were closed, the buses to the town were not running and you certainly did not take a car into town (13 miles away) for fear of

getting a visit from the Elder or worse - the Minister. Glaswegians visiting the island would describe that day as being "as slow as a week in the Gaol".

Now why do I tell you all this I hear you ask? Well it's because every time I read these stories of Jesus in conflict with the Pharisees, I am reminded of life on the isle of Lewis on a Sunday as being probably the closest experience to what it was like in Jesus' day.

Luke chapter 6 is often referred to as the Sermon on the Plain. Some have criticised it as being just a reworking of the Sermon of the Mount and being given a different name. I have never been convinced by that argument as the subject matter and the audience seems to be quite different from Matthew chapter 5 and I am more of the view that any similarities will be down to that of a gifted preacher being able to re-use sermon material for a different Sermon. (Tell me a preacher who has never re-used material he or she used in a previous Sermon - I know I have.) The opening part of the Sermon is a classic confrontation with Jesus' most ardent critics and enemies. They are watching Jesus like a Hawk to see how He responds on this, the great day of Rest for all in Israel across the land. They seem to expend a huge amount of personnel and resource watching to see what Jesus Does next so that they catch him out but of course Jesus is all too aware and as the story unfolds he counters their every move brilliantly till they leave seething with anger and frustration and latent murderous intent is now left to grow. The reason for all this being a man's withered Hand is restored to full health and strength before their very eyes. Jesus was making a very important statement here about who he was and why he came while the Pharisees were revealing something about themselves at the same time.

The Bible Commentators make a variety of comments about this - see below: -

Verse 10. - Stretch forth thy hand! "It must have sounded a strange command to the people in the synagogue. How could he stretch out that withered, powerless limb? But with the command went forth the power.... And we read that he did so, and as he stretched out the limb, so long powerless, the man discovered and the people saw that the cure was already performed." **(Pulpit commentary)**

"By this novel way of putting His case, our Lord teaches the great ethical principle, that to neglect any opportunity of doing good is to incur the guilt of doing evil; and by this law He bound His own spirit." -

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

“He knew their thoughts - their dark, malicious designs - by the question, which they proposed to him, whether it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath-days.” ***Barnes' Notes on the Bible***

“Christ was neither ashamed nor afraid to own the purposes of his grace. He healed the poor man, though he knew that his enemies would take advantage against him for it. Let us not be drawn either from our duty or from our usefulness by any opposition. We may well be amazed, that the sons of men should be so wicked.” ***Matthew Henry's Commentary***

On the One hand we see the Power of Christ to change a person's life while on the other we see those in religious authority blinded by their own rage and impotence to act at the time to see who Jesus really is and what he can do. These words also remind us of one of the gifts of the Spirit - that of Discernment revealed in this account of Jesus and his ability to see behind any actions the true hidden agendas that are really at play. Jesus in Luke Chapter 6 reveals his capacity for discernment. He Knew their Dark thoughts and malicious designs all the while revealing his own intention which wasn't to challenge The Law or the Prophets but to reveal the Hypocrisy of his critics. Haven't we all come across a traffic warden or a park attendant or someone who is slavishly following the rules that they are more interested in keeping the Regs than demonstrating that Grace that supersedes that of the Law for the greater benefit. The Pharisees and Sadducees were more upset that Sabbath Law had been breached than seeing this man's hand being healed. They had become so blind, that in their rage they could not see the miracle before them. Jesus does this to show to all the error of their thinking at times and I reckon that had any one of the Sadducees or Pharisees come to Jesus realising their error then Jesus view of those individuals would be very different.

The Story here reminds us that Jesus' mission is to reveal something of God's Love and Grace available to all, his healing power that not only restored this man's hand but would also heal the wretched sinful condition of humanity through the Event of the Cross of Calvary, an event which even still sees the Pharisees and Sadducees blind with rage, unable to see past the Law as they understood it and failing to see the Messiah who stood before them who would later become the Saviour of the World while they all the while shouted, “Crucify Him”.

That blindness and even rage leaving an inability to see who Jesus is and to understand what Jesus Did is I think still very much alive today. There are still 'those who are none so blind that they will not see'. Your witness and mine

as the man and women of faith today will be the means by which Jesus helps others discern what God's good and perfect will for them might be. FB Meyer in his daily notes concerning Luke 6 finished the daily reading with a prayer which sums the story beautifully;

"Most Blessed Lord, we thank Thee that we may become Thy disciples. Give us teachable hearts and listening ears; may we sit at Thy feet and be moulded according to Thy mind. Oh, choose us, and send us forth, and trust us with Thy sacred ministry, fulfilling in us the good pleasure of Thy will. AMEN."

Have a great week everyone and we will return to our written devotions again on the 26th July. And While I am out of touch for the time being, I hope you will keep safe in the meantime.

Calum D. Macdonald

Blessings for the New Week

*May your week
ahead be filled with:*

*Blessings of
Good Health,
Strength,
Friendship,
Kindness,
Compassion,
and Love.*

**May God bless you
and your loved ones
and keep you safe.**

