



Giffnock: the Park Church
Sunday 17th May 2020

He Careth for You



Good Morning everyone,

Having spoken with some in the course of this past week, it is good to see how well people are contending with all that is happening as we come to yet another week of lockdown albeit with a slight relaxation of the ground rules that we are all to follow. Many of us I am sure are looking forward to the day when we can again meet up with family and friends although I am pretty sure many of the social distance measures may be in place for some time after all this blows over.

I am mindful of the words of the Apostle Paul when wrote to Timothy his companion, *"³⁻⁴ Every time I say your name in prayer—which is practically all the time—I thank God for you, the God I worship with my whole life in the tradition of my ancestors. I miss you a lot, especially when I remember that last tearful good-bye, and I look forward to a joy-packed reunion."*

(2 Timothy 1:3&4)

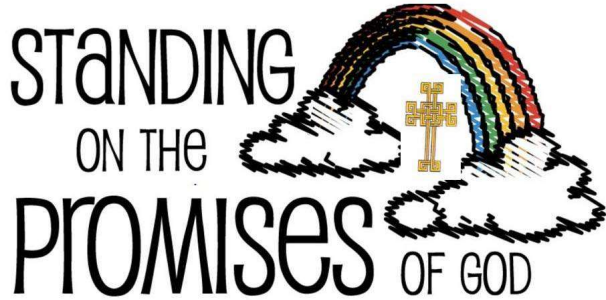
I don't know about you, but I miss getting to church on a Sunday morning. Wilma and I come down every Thursday evening to set the bells for the 8pm NHS Clapping Hands Tribute. Interestingly afterwards, Wilma likes to take a walk through the premises of the halls and church just to get a feel for the place again. She spoke of missing the place and those who meet in it. She is not the only one to have made that remark and I am sure there are many of you feel very similarly.

As we make tentative steps to come out from this dreadful lockdown and as we see progress in slowing down the loss of life on account of this terrible disease and look to contend with how best we adapt to life in a post Covid 19 world, my reflection this morning continues the theme of standing on God's promise and to remind ourselves that in his promise "He Cares for You" and I hope you enjoy reading this.

Stay safe as always and remember all impacted by C19 in your prayers. From all of us at the manse to all of you.

Best wishes

Calum D. Macdonald



Favourite quotes about Prayer

“O, let the place of secret prayer become to me the most beloved spot on earth”.

- Andrew Murray (A Scottish Preacher)

(Some of our Prayer this morning has been adapted from a prayer on the Christian Aid Website)

Our Gracious God and Father, Thank you that we can gather before You collectively in this way despite our physical isolation from one another. We thank all the more knowing that you are one who is able to come alongside each one of us in these times and impart to us your strength to sustain us and keep us. Your Word reminds that Your ***‘Love...bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things’... that your ‘Love never ends’*** Help us gracious God by your Spirit to be encouraged by these things and to rise to the challenge of faith in such troubled times.

Forgive us when we lose heart, when despair creeps in upon our lives and we falter in our witness and service. By the power of your grace help us always to know we can begin afresh with you, sins past and now forgotten, such was the victory at Calvary. With renewed strength and resolve to bear witness to your love and follow the example of the Saviour, teach us how we might spur one another on to deeds in your name. While we think of our own needs we would also remember needs of others at this time. Our prayer is that you would hear us as we remember them...

For the health workers tending the seriously ill
for the scientists working on a vaccination
for the researchers analysing data and identifying trends
for the media outlets working to communicate reality
For our Educators as they initiate a return for pupils & students to schools
colleges and universities,
for the supermarket workers,
for our hygiene and sanitation providers
for the good news stories of recoveries and effective planning
for the singing from balconies by locked-down communities

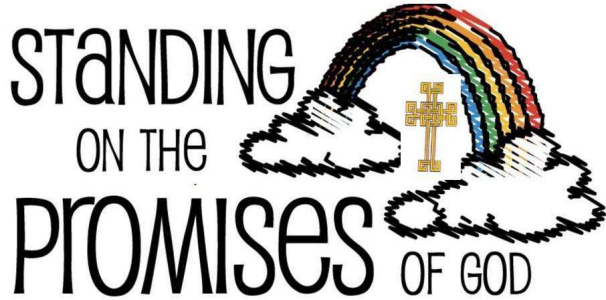
for the recognition that isolation doesn't need to mean loneliness
for the notes through letterboxes offering help and support
for the internet and telephones and technology that connects
for the awakened appreciation of what is truly important
We give you our thanks Gracious God.

For those who are unwell or concerned for loved ones;
for those who were already very anxious,
for those immune suppressed or compromised,
for those vulnerable because of underlying conditions,
for those in the 'most at risk to coronavirus' categories,
for those watching their entire income stream dry up,
for those who have no choice but to go out to work,
for those who are afraid to be at home,
for those who are more lonely than they've ever been;
for those who are bereaved and grieving...

Father in Heaven be their healer today, their comfort and protection,
be their strength, their shield and provision
be their security, their safety and close companion

Raise your Church in this time to be your well-washed hands and faithful feet
That it may be an ever present help in tin times of trouble or pain,
That it may respond by love in action, if even from a safe distance.
Give us courage always to do the right this day and every day.

God, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.
Amen



1 Peter 5, 1 – 11
New International Version - UK (NIVUK)

To the elders and the flock

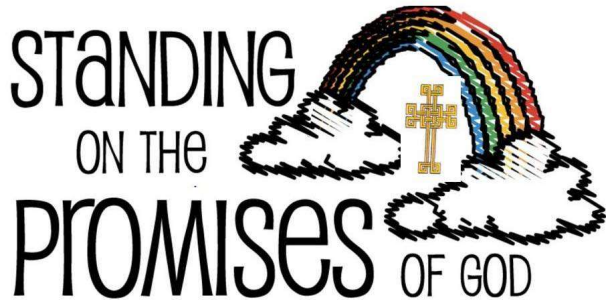
5 *To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: ² be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; ³ not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.*

⁵ *In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility towards one another, because, 'God opposes the proud but shows favour to the humble.*

⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. ⁷ Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

⁸ *Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.*

¹⁰ *And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. ¹¹ To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.*



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Sunday Reflection A promise to sustain us as we cast our burdens upon Him

For this morning's reflection our focus will be on the promise contained in 1 Peter 5: 6 & 7



CH3 151

God who made the Earth

*God who made the earth,
the air, the sky, the sea,
who gave the light its birth,
careth for me.*

*God who made the grass,
the flow'r, the fruit, the tree,
the day and night to pass,
careth for me.*

*God who made the sun,
The moon, the stars, is he
who, when life's clouds come on,
careth for me.*

*God who sent his Son
to die on Calvary,
he if I lean on him,
will care for me.*

Sarah Betts Rhodes (1870)



The First letter of Peter is one of a number of letters in the New Testament referred to as the Pastoral Letters, where the writer seeks encourage and reaffirm people in their faith and trust of the Saviour.

Chapter 5 is the closing stage of the letter where Peter, who is the ascribed author of the letter, is at this point making reference to those who were the elders of the church given responsibility for "the Flock under their Care", as he Put it. But the words that follow while they may have been directed at the Elders really have an application for all to live by so that by the time we get to reading verse 6 & 7, (the keys verses for us this morning), he offers some very sage advice and a sincere promise, that when we "humble ourselves before God He will lift us up" and that the promise to us is that "when we cast our burdens upon Him, He will sustain us." When I was thinking about this the words of the old children's hymn written by Sarah Betts Rhosdes came to mind, the

lyrics of which are of course on the left hand said of the page here.

Sarah Betts RHODES, (neé Bradshaw 1829-1904) born and brought up in Sheffield, she saw out her final days in Wakefield. She married a

master silversmith and silver merchant. She was a self-educated lady, who with her husband's encouragement became a writer and sculptor. After his death she eventually became headmistress of Worksop High School for Girls. A faithful member the Congregational Church, she only ever been known for one hymn, 'God, who made the earth' which was eventually printed in the Methodist Sunday School Hymn Book (1879). Cleverly she also wrote the music score for the hymn that we have come know through the decades. I chose the words of God who made the earth because of the affirmation it made of Gods' concern and God's care. Sarah Betts Rhodes had no doubts about God's capacity to Care for us; it oozes off the page as we read and off the tongue as we sing very easily. The Hymn itself is more than a reminder of the promise of 1 Peter 5:7 for it also declares something of the majesty and power of God in Creation. Perhaps when writing the song she was thinking of the words of Psalm 24: 1&2 ... "the Earth is the Lord's and everything in it". Theologians would describe her thinking as an understanding of the Doctrine of the Sovereignty of God. In her simple but elegant writing of this hymn she communicates brilliantly, I think, a hymn for church for church worship that children and people of every walk could understand. But the gem in the story of this is that she not only reminds us of God's Sovereign power but of his overwhelming love too. For as she reflects on the his Creative Power (Hymn Verse 1) and his sustaining power (Hymn verses 2&3), she then goes in to remind us in these simple words of the Saviour's love for a broken world. In each of the verses she begins and concludes with " God...careth for me" and in the final verse affirms that "God... will care for me."

In all the promises that we reflect on at this time, in all the promises that we can see in the Old and New Testament, the one conclusion underlying all of these is that which Sarah Betts Rhodes was able to affirm that " God will care for you and for me". (Not bad for somebody who was self educated - who wasn't a highly trained academic, expositor or preacher like those who were her contemporaries like CH Spurgeon or Martin Lloyd Jones.) She was a lady whose simple faith in Jesus concluded that God loved her such that He would give her the strength she required, that her needs would be met, that he would give her hope that she could hold onto and that it would sustain her through the difficult days to come. **Isn't that what we all need?**

A simple thought from a simple children's hymn and a gracious promise from our Father in heaven that when we cast our burdens upon Him, He will sustain us. Have a great week and as always I wish you Good health

Calum D. Macdonald

God's Promise
isn't that He'll keep bad things from happening; it's that He'll be there if they do.



• • •
"May the strength
of God our Father
pilot us,

May the wisdom
of God the Spirit
instruct us,

May the hand of
God the Son
protect us,

May the word of
God direct us and
Be always ours
this day and for
evermore.

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