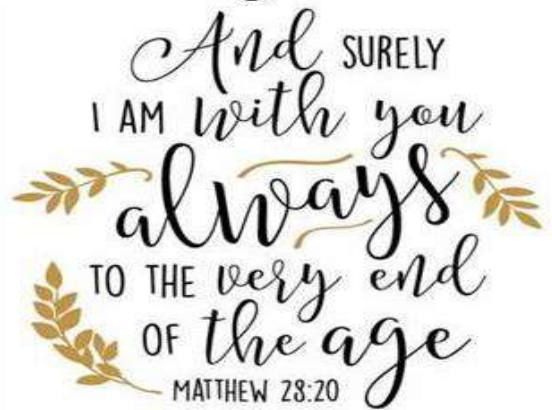
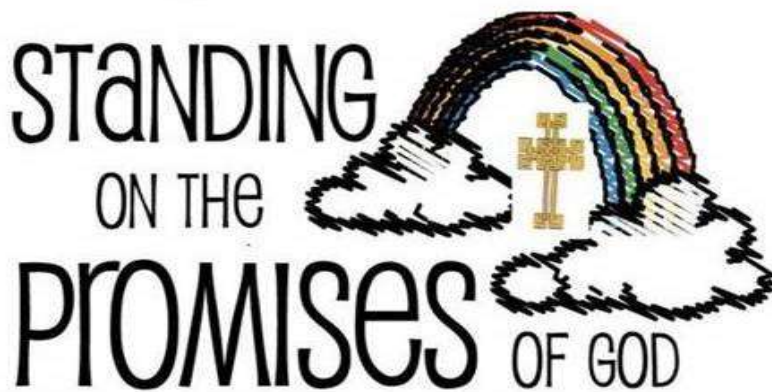


Giffnock the Park Church Sunday 24th May 2020



Good Morning Everyone,

And once again another welcome to you as we reflect on what God might have to say to us on his Word again during this difficult time. It is hard to believe that literally two months ago we began the story of a National Lockdown where we are only now beginning to see restrictions relax and plans be presented to a nation in all its devolved parts and all its diversity contending with the circumstance we now find ourselves in. Are we seeing the hope of coming through this? Well, let us truly hope so with as little loss of life and damage to the health of ourselves and fellow citizens.

As Christians in an increasingly diverse community with people from many backgrounds, creeds, faith and even defined rejection of any faith, the challenge remains for us today to make the Gospel as relevant for people today as it was to those of past generations. My hope is that as we conclude this series of Standing on the Promises of God with this reflection and perhaps look forward to thinking about what God is saying to us for our generation and the generation to come.

This morning's reflection is a thought seeking to focus and zero in on the Promise of God's abiding Presence with us – something that we all need to take to heart and hold onto in these times.

As always, I hope everyone remains in good health and steers clear of this terrible trouble

Yours in Christ


Calum D. Macdonald

Giffnock the Park Church Sunday 24th May 2020

STANDING
ON THE
PROMISES
OF GOD



And SURELY
I AM with you
always
TO THE very end
OF the age
MATTHEW 28:20



“Prayer is not asking. Prayer is putting oneself in the hands of God, at His disposition, and listening to His voice in the depth of our hearts.”

— Mother Teresa

Our Gracious God and Father,

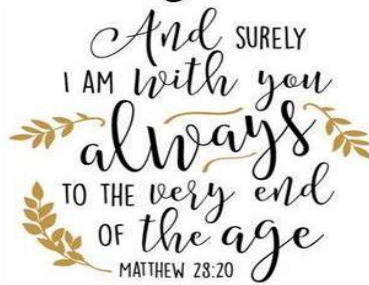
We thank you for your amazing power and work in our lives this day and for your ever abiding presence. We thank You for your goodness to us and for your blessings over us, that You are the source of real hope for today, and promise for tomorrow, able to take us through even in these, the toughest of times, able always to strengthen us for your purposes through these occasions.

We thank You for Jesus and for his great love and care serving as our example to follow. We thank you the mercy and grace that is ours through faith in Jesus and for his promise He is always with us and will never leave us. We thank You for His incredible sacrifice so that we might have freedom and life.

Forgive us for when we don't thank you enough, for who You are, for all that you do, for all that you've given. Help us this day to set our eyes and our hearts on the Saviour afresh, the author and perfecter of our Faith. Renew our spirits, fill us with your peace and joy. Helps us to find the means by which we can be a blessing to others by the things we say and the things we do, by the life of faith that we live.

We love You and we need You, this day and every day. We give You our praise and thanks, for You alone are worthy of our thanks and praise and worship this day and every day and we declare this in Jesus' name and for his sake..... Amen!

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Sunday 24th May 2020



An Old Testament Reading

Psalm 139: 1 – 17 (New International Version) (For the director of music - of David a Psalm.)

- 1. You have searched me, LORD, and you know me.*
- 2 You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.*
- 3 You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.*
- 4 Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely.*
- 5 You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.*
- 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.*
- 7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?*
- 8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.*
- 9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,*
- 10 even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.*
- 11 If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,"*
- 12 even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.*
- 13 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.*
- 14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.*
- 15 My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.*
- 16 Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.*
- 17 How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!*

A New Testament Reading

John 14: 8 – 21 New International Version (NIV)

⁶ Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you really know me, you will know^[b] my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

⁸ Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”

⁹ Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰ Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.

¹¹ **Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me;** or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. ¹² Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit

¹⁵ “If you love me, keep my commands. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be^[c] in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹ Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰ **On that day you will realise that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.**

²¹ **Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.**”

Giffnock the Park Church
Sunday 24th May 2020

STANDING
ON THE
PROMISES



And SURELY
I AM with you
always
TO THE very end
OF the age
MATTHEW 28:20

A Refection for Sunday 24th May 2020
The Promise of God's Abiding Presence

For our reflection this morning I thought to share with what will be a final session in the series of standing on God's Promises and as we draw this train of thought to a close for the moment, there is one promise left which I think affirms and underlines all the promises that we have reflected on in these written reflections and that the promise of Jesus to us of his ever abiding Presence. It strikes me that this is a time for us to dwell on this because for some there is a real sense of isolation. We cannot see our friends and our families in the way that we would like and even need. The tension of that can begin to have repercussions and there is already a great deal being said about the mental health of the nation while this is ongoing and the routine of normal life has been so badly interrupted.

*God is always near me,
Hearing what I say;
Knowing all my
thoughts and deeds,
All my work and play.*

An Old Traditional Children's Hymn, expressed a very simple and profound understanding of the nearness of God to us and many of us will have very fond memories of Sunday School days when that was a hymn sung by all,

young and old alike because the truth expressed in these words although written for a young audience had a meaning for all ages - that Christ's ever abiding presence was never far away. Our two readings from the old and new testament reflect this as does the promise of the Great Commission of Matthew 28, that Christ will always be with us. Some once said,
"God never sends you into a situation alone.

God always goes before you. He stands beside you, He walks behind you.

Whatever situation you are dealing with right now, be confident - God is with You."

Whoever wrote that was probably reaffirming and rewording what St Patrick had said in his great prayer. King David when he wrote the psalm so long ago realised there was no place that you go or run to where God was not already there, theologians refer to this as God's Omnipresence. New Testament theologians saw something different happen in the life Jesus' disciples and the text of John 14 is an indicator of that when in several verses of that chapter Jesus said " I am in the Father, the father is in me and I am in You." An understanding of how a person upon their acknowledgement of Jesus as Lord, placing their faith and trust in Him - as we all are required to do, then something special happens Jesus by his Spirit comes and actually dwells within us, becomes part of us and we become inextricably linked with him , God our Father and one another, "I am in the Father, the father is in me and I am in You." And that means that Psalm 139 takes a whole new tack because it is not just about God's omnipresence as amazing as that is, it is about realising that wherever we may go, Christ goes with us. This means that whenever we sit around the Lord's Table, Christ is with us, when we go to our work place or meet with our friends, Christ is with us. When we celebrate the birth of our child or grandchild or make our vows of marriage to one another, or celebrate any other occasion where family or friends may gather, Christ is with us.

It is not only the positives though where this is true. It is in the moments of bereavement, it is in the situations of stress and concern, of ill health and even facing death itself. This weekend is the anniversary of the death of My mother in Law, 'Old Maggie' we used to call her. She was a devout lady of deep faith in Jesus who in the latter years of her life suffered from Dementia and eventually when no longer able to live at home lived in the Church of Scotland's Eventide home Williamwood House over in Netherlee.

One of the things that brought great comfort to both myself and Wilma more especially was how well looked after she was there. More critically though, as old Maggie began to lose the frame of reference of everything and everyone that she knew because the awful illness of dementia strips people gradually of every memory they have causing one to be alone and distressed and isolated, both Wilma and I took great heart from these words of John 14, when we realised even though we walk through the valley of the shadow of Dementia or even Death itself - Christ is with us. "I am in the father, the Father is in me, and I am in You."

No matter what we may be feeling just now , how isolated we might feel or ill we might be with Covid19 or any other illness or condition, that is life threatening or otherwise, know that Christ is always with You. It is the promise he made in the immediacy of His resurrection, a promise held firmly by his disciples then and every generation of Christian ever since and has sustained them through the good and the downright awful. What Christ has done for them, He will do for you.

God Bless You in these challenging days.

Calum D. Macdonald

*May You Find
That God the Father's
Love is true
that Jesus our Saviour,
is an example we can follow
that His Spirit brings guidance & a
presence to be reassured by so that for*

*Happy moments,
Praise God.*

*Difficult moments,
Seek God.*

*Quiet moments,
Worship God.*

*Painful moments,
Trust God.*

*Every moment,
Thank God.*