



*Giffnock : the Park Church*  
*Sunday 3th October 2020*  
*Reflections on Psalm 23:6*



Good Morning,

As we come to another Sunday, we look again at the week that has past and the week that is to come. We can see that change is on the horizon, change that is more than a reference to a shift in the weather patterns with the colder weather beginning to kick in and good weather formally drawn to a close as we enter Autumn and leave the summer behind.

The world of politics continues to be in turmoil nationally and internationally. Travel between Nations has become increasingly difficult and even within our own nation for some, severe travel restrictions apply. The rising concerns continue as we still contend with the Pandemic that is Covid19. Universities and College campuses in Lockdown see students worried they will not get home for Christmas. The rest of us in the meantime, start to wonder if any of us will get to spend time with our families during the festive period. The concerns of war between nations almost seem trivial in comparison. Where can we go and who can we turn to in these moments? The song writer Larry Norman in one of his songs wrote,

*“What a mess the world is in, I wonder who began it.  
Don't ask me, I'm only visiting this planet”.*

His comment comes on the back of a realisation that our future is secure through our faith in Christ. I hope that you are not overwhelmed with worry in these times that we live in. Someone once said that as they remembered the story of Creation and how God brought everything into being in 6 days, they then realised that Jesus has been preparing a place for you and for the last 2000 yrs. The Heaven that awaits us all must be truly something to look forward to. If we have nothing else to look forward to in this coming week, hold on to that thought and in the meantime I hope you know God's blessing even in these times through this coming week.

Calum D. Macdonald



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*Prayer is not eloquence, but earnestness; not the definition of helplessness, but the feeling of it; not figures of speech, but earnestness of soul.*  
— *Hannah More (English religious writer and philanthropist)*

Let us Pray

Our Loving Heavenly Father, You are the mastermind of all creation, you hold the depths of the earth in your hands. You flung the stars into space across distances we cannot begin to calculate and yet You are closer to us than the air we breathe. We thank You for Your Love for us and we pray that as we draw close to You that you would fill our souls with the wonder of your love and light. Your Power is there for all to see in the marvel of Creation, your Love is there for all to see in the form of your Son and our Saviour, Jesus. Give us strength and courage this day to reflect that love, that we might be the light in a world of darkness, a beacon that draws others to You and Your Spirit as the Seal of Your promise of Salvation upon us.

Forgive us when we shrink back from your love and fall back on old ways and old habits, hurting You, hurting others, hurting ourselves. And as we seek your forgiveness for our sinfulness, Renew in us a sense of joy, as we see again your Grace and Mercy at work. Paint the dark shadows around our lives us with your light, your love and your salvation.

Hear us today as we pray for you church in this broken world, remembering those who meet for an online General Assembly and seek a way forward during this time of worldwide concern. Be with all those in the wider church who endure persecution for their Faith wherever and whoever they may be.

Hear us today as we pray for a world too often darkened by hatred, evil, power and greed. Your broken world cries out from the depths, it is a world dominated by the darkness of war, terror, illness, pain and suffering.

We pray for those in lands where there is on-going and deepening conflict. Be with those who flee from their homes in fear and terror we pray and be with those who risk their lives to free others from fear and the terror of war and conflict. Bless those who would be the Peace makers this day. May we all see your light, feel your strength and power and know the truth of your promise so that we will not be overcome by the darkness of this world.

God our Father in Your compassion and grace, be with those in a dark place today. Let your light shine through the darkness of all their pain and their suffering. Be with those who are enduring pain and illness - our prayer would be that they know your healing power. We thank You again for the Skill of the Doctor and care of the nurse, for all who work in the Health and Social Care Sector, in hospitals, in residences, in the Community.

Be with all who grieve today, those who have seen death take their loved ones. Comfort them and lift them up with the promise and hope of the Gospel.

God our Father, renew within us a deeper sense of who we are in your Love and Grace. Remind us always of the Hope of the Gospel and to know your presence with us in every circumstance, a presence that makes us Ambassadors for the Gospel again that our words, our actions and our faith stands as a living examples of your forgiving, healing, life-giving love and mercy upon us in Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.



**Psalm 23:6**  
Surely goodness and love  
will follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house  
of the LORD forever.

**John 14: 1 - 17**  
**(New International Version)**

***Jesus Comforts His Disciples***

*14 “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. <sup>2</sup> My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. <sup>4</sup> You know the way to the place where I am going.”*

***Jesus the Way to the Father***

*<sup>5</sup> Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”*

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

*<sup>8</sup> Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”*

*<sup>9</sup> 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’? <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.*

### ***Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit***

*<sup>15</sup> “If you love me, keep my commands. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— <sup>17</sup> 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 in you.*

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## **Sunday Service Intimation**

We continue to share a service of Prayer and Reflection each Sunday at least for the time being. Our service begins at 11am and all are most welcome to attend. For those wishing to attend, please be advised that current guidelines stipulate a limit of 50 people attending be set with appropriate Socially Distancing.

If intend to coming to Park Church this Sunday **YOU MUST** contact Mr Bert Dickov by phone ( **Tel No 07947611412**) or by E-Mail ([bertdickov@hotmail.com](mailto:bertdickov@hotmail.com)), to intimate that you wish to attend Church. This is to ensure we have contact details for all attendees if an outbreak occurs.

***The congregation will be subjected to the following questions, namely,***

Have you been in contact with someone who has been diagnosed with Covid-19 within the last 14 days?

1. Have you experienced any of the following symptoms ?
2. Do you have a High Temperature?
3. Do you have a Dry persistent Cough?
4. Are having any Chest pain, Headache, Muscle pain, Shortness of Breath or Dizziness, Loss of Taste or Smell?

**If the answer to any of the above is Yes, we recommend that you do not attend the group, instead they should go home, self-isolate and contact your doctor or NHS for medical advice.**

If the answer is negative to all questions, then you will still have to follow certain protocols while using the Church premises. You will be required to:

- a) sanitise your hands, using the dispensers available on entry and leaving the building.
- b) wear a face covering, at all times
- c) maintain appropriate Social Distancing.



**Psalm 23:6**  
Surely goodness and love  
will follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house  
of the LORD forever.

### **Our Closing Thoughts on a much Loved Psalm**

Six weeks ago we took a look at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm and in each subsequent week I have sought to see how although these are great words written for a time so long ago, they might still have something that is able resonate with life today. That is indeed the marvel of God's Word as a whole. In the pages of Genesis through to Revelation, we can discover for ourselves the wonder of God's Love and Grace, the promise of eternity and the gift of his Son. The 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm has echoed some of these themes as we have systematically reflected on each verse.

Today as we draw this theme of reflections to a close, we finish on a high note. The two images of the Shepherd and the feast convey different but no less important themes bringing one to a place of contentment that will sustain us through what Spurgeon refers to in his commentary. as the "Dark Days and the Bright Days". In the final verse of psalm 23, it speaks of Goodness and Love or Mercy as it is sometimes translated in other versions and Spurgeon speaks very fondly of these words as "the two Guardian Angels" that guard over us. "Goodness supplies our needs and Mercy blots out our sins", he said.

For the Christian these words are an affirmation of several things. It Affirms the promise of God's eternal presence with us always throughout the rest of our days and beyond. Every Christmas we will see adverts warning everyone of the responsibilities in taking a puppy home for Christmas and They will say, "A Puppy is not just for Christmas!"

Our Father in Heaven wants us to be assured that our time with Him is not just for Life but for Eternity. The most well know verse of the New Testament sums this up well.

*“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life”.*

**John 3:16**

It also affirms that measure of the Grace of God to effect change in a person's life. Psychologists and psychiatrists will often say that the only person to truly change a person is that person themselves. They are the only ones who can change their behaviour. In Human terms I can understand that. I can influence someone to initiate change themselves I cannot do it for them.

However, in terms of God's influence, we have to remember things happen on a different level. The Supernatural capacity of God to effect change I think is understated in western culture and society. I believe that God does effect change in a person, he changes the heart. The testimony of that is. I think, borne out in the lives of those whose lives have been in the gutter wracked by alcohol or drug addiction. There are many who will simply testify that that their lives could only change with that moment of the Conversion of the Soul. I have met individuals who would tell you that their families and loved ones tried to get them to change, to give up drinking or kick the drug habit and how they could never seem do it in their own strength despite their loved ones support. They would tell you it was only the transforming power of God that truly changed them and that faith in Jesus and His "Goodness and Mercy" has been the deciding factor which sustained them through the dark moments of going through what used to be called "Cold Turkey".

Many have written of such experiences bearing witness to God's Goodness and Mercy impacting their lives. Their Saving Grace has been the Love of a Saviour in the Jesus who not only gave his life but who continues to exhibit his presence with us in every circumstance by His Spirit. The Conversion of the human soul is not conditional on the extremes of human experience. For some, experiences like that bring them to that place, for others, their situation may be less extreme ( as is my own in that regard) but it does culminate in that John 3: 16 moment realising the enormity of God's love and Sacrifice to make his Goodness and Mercy a reality.

The final Affirmation is that sense of Feeling at Home with God. The expression, "dwelling in the House of the Lord forever" is a curious one. Will heaven be a place where we all live in this humungous and glorious Hotel that is also a Church, where we can live with one another and give thanks to God together eternally? Does Psalmist David want us to think in these terms or is there something else being suggested? My own thoughts go to that simple concept of being 'at Home with God', being comfortable in his presence.

Both our sons are now financially independent from us and living their own lives. Wilma and I have always said to them that when they leave home they will always be welcome and that no matter where they may live in the world, that whenever they came back that, as their parents, our hope was always that they should feel at home, able to get up and do their own thing as if they were in their own house, to make a cup of coffee when they want or put the television on to watch their favourite programme or whatever. There are many who will know the pleasure of your company but it is only those whom you trust fully and have a confidence in whose company you will truly feel at Home in.

God our Father wants us to not just to know his presence but to feel at home in it. When we get to that place, it is then that we truly identify with these Words of Psalm 23,

***"Surely Goodness and Love shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever."***

In conclusion I came across an image that cites the 23<sup>rd</sup> psalm and makes some great conclusions which I found to be an encouragement and I trust you will too. Have a great week despite the weather to come.

Calum D. Macdonald



*Psalm 23*

*New International Version – UK*

*A psalm of David.*

<sup>1</sup> *The LORD is my shepherd, ... That's relationship*

*I lack nothing.... That's Supply*

<sup>2</sup> *He makes me lie down in green pastures, ... That's Rest*

*he leads me beside quiet waters, ... That's Refreshment*

<sup>3</sup> *he refreshes my soul,,,,, That's Healing*

*He guides me along the right paths... That's Guidance*

*for his name's sake. ... That's Purpose*

<sup>4</sup> *Even though I walk through the darkest valley,*

*That's Testing*

*I will fear no evil, .... That's Protection*

*for you are with me; ... That's Faithfulness*

*your rod and your staff they comfort me.....*

*That's Discipline*

<sup>5</sup> *You prepare a table before me in the presence*

*of my enemies. .... That's Hope*

*You anoint my head with oil; ... That's Consecration*

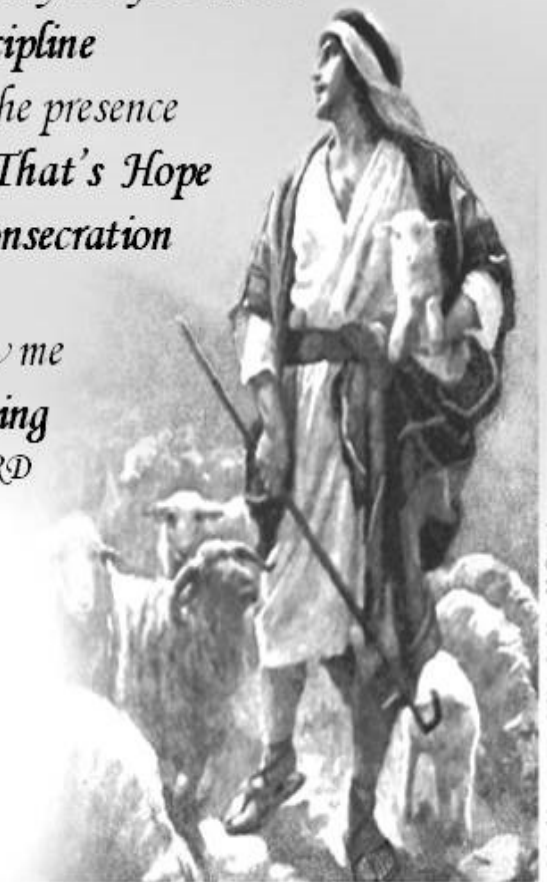
*my cup overflows..... That's Abundance*

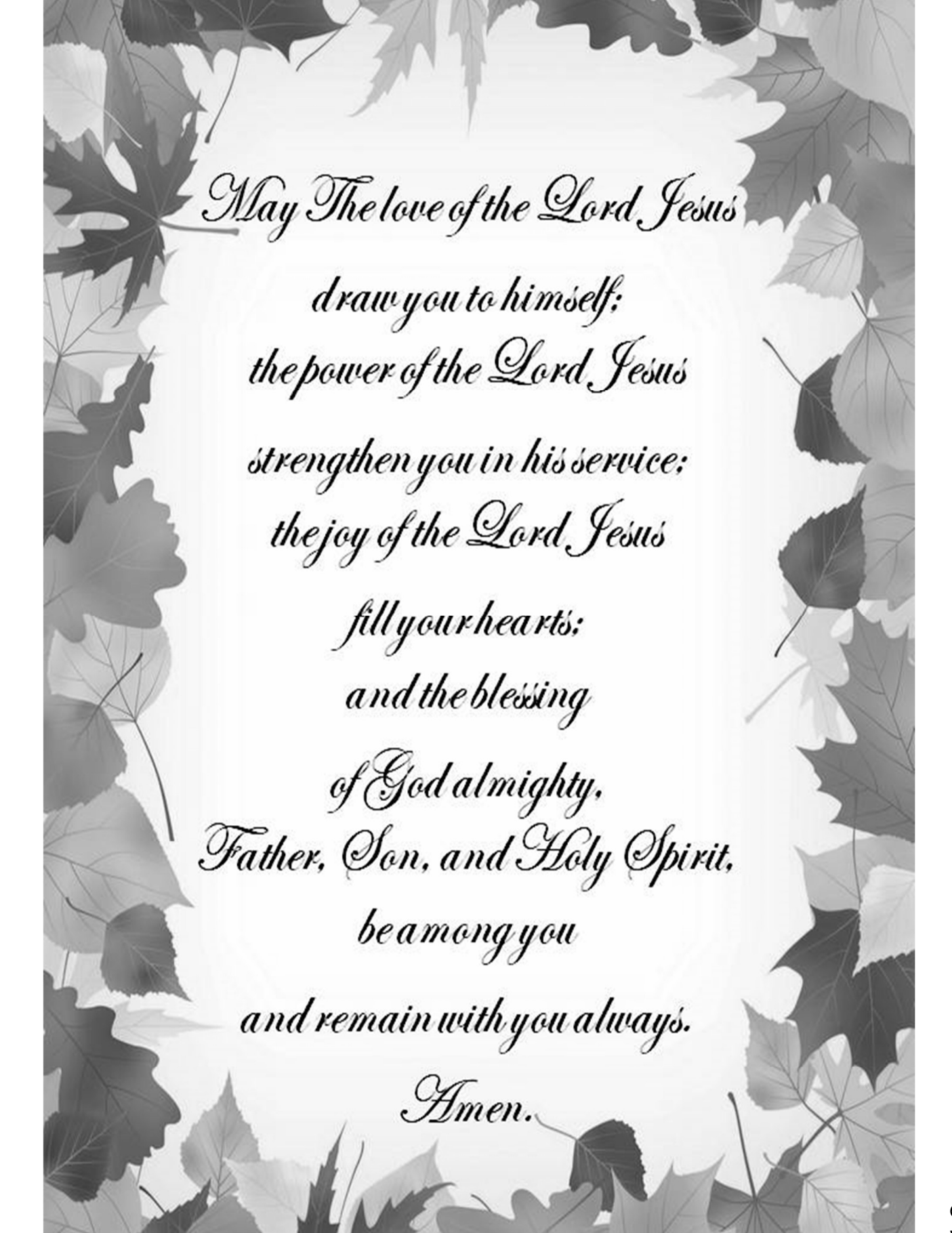
<sup>6</sup> *Surely your goodness and love will follow me*

*all the days of my life, ..... That's Blessing*

*and I will dwell in the house of the LORD*

*for ever..... That's Eternity*





*May The love of the Lord, Jesus  
draw you to himself;  
the power of the Lord, Jesus  
strengthen you in his service;  
the joy of the Lord, Jesus  
fill your hearts;  
and the blessing  
of God almighty,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
be among you  
and remain with you always.  
Amen.*