

Giffnock the Park Church

Sunday 2nd May 2021



THE SUNDAY DEVOTIONAL



Good Morning ,

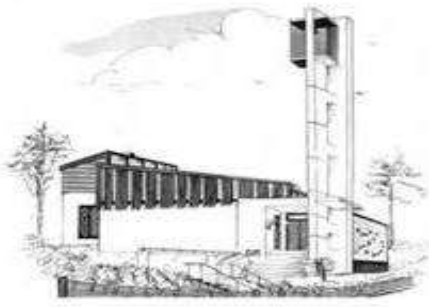
Welcome to another Devotional on this the first Sunday of the Month of May. We are now officially one third of the way through the year of 2021 and I don't know about you but I am feeling these days pass all too quickly. Even while being stuck in a rut, it seems the time has not really lingered. Of course this may not be everyone's experience.



The month of May is of course significant for another reason - that of Politics locally and nationally. Someone sent me this picture which I suspect sums up what many will do with the many flyers that come through the door from all the respective parties vying for your vote. That being said, Thursday 6th May is not to be taken lightly as we all have an opportunity which is unavailable to many people across the world today who have no say whatsoever as to who their political leaders will be. (You will notice I have specifically said leaders and not masters.) We have, I am sure, bemoaned one particular party or another at some point over this last year or so about decisions taken and consequences that have resulted. We may have particular views about one party leader or another.

This is one time where as a nation we might have opportunity to pass comment through the power of the Ballot box and I trust you will see this letter as encouraging you to be involved in the political process while at the same time being politically neutral because as a minister of the Gospel, it is not my role to promote one particular party or another but it is my role to suggest that it is our Christian duty to influence who might take us forward in the coming years out from these dark times to what optimistically might be a brighter future. So as we head for the Ballot Box I would say - may the best man or woman win.

Best wishes



Church News



Church Flowers

*In
Loving
Memory*

Flowers this week were kindly donated for the church by Mrs Elizabeth Hutton in fond memory of her Mum, Mrs May Brewer.



As many of you know already restrictions placed upon our lives as a consequence of these Pandemic Times are gradually being relaxed. While churches are now open or beginning to open again, there are still quite tight restrictions on what we can and cannot do and so we simply ask for your patience for that wee bit longer as we look to see things begin to return to what we might see appropriately as a Normality we can enjoy. If you need any guidance about the state of restriction at the moment, please speak with the minister.



Carnwadric Church

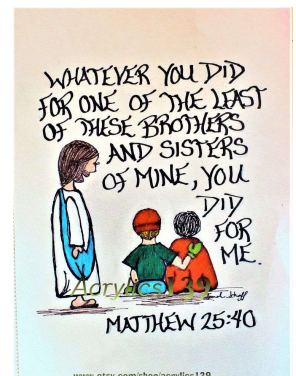
Foodbank Shopping List

UHT milk, Sugar, Coffee and Juice (diluting) along with tinned products such as:-

Tinned carrots or peas Custard, Rice pudding, Fruit, Spaghetti, Baked Beans, Soups

Tins for meals: Mince, Stews, Hotdogs, Ham, Corned Beef, Ravioli, Mac & Cheese As well as Cleaning Products & Personal Hygiene Products. -

A big Thank You from all at the Foodbank Team at Carnwadric Church.





It matters little what form of prayer we adopt or how many words we use. What matters is the faith which lays hold on God, knowing that He knows our needs before we even ask Him. That is what gives Christian prayer its boundless confidence and its joyous certainty.

(Dietrich Bonhoeffer: 1906 – 1945)

Let us Pray...

For the Joys and for the Sorrows; the best and the worst of times; for these moments now and for what may come - for all that has gone before; for the fears that crowd in on us, for the failure of our plans to succeed and for the dreams and the hopes that we have as well as the truth of what we are in your eyes...Our Father in Heaven as we consider all these circumstances, we thank You that in faith we can say that for these times we have Jesus. We can never begin to thank You enough for the gift of Your Son. As we read your Word, we learn more and more that from the beginning of Time your Hand has been upon us, that Your plan has already been in place to save us. Your Word teaches of how in six days you brought creation into being and that for these past two thousand years you have been preparing a place for each one of us, we can never begin to thank You enough for the promise of Eternity secured through Calvary and the Empty Tomb. We can never begin to thank you enough for the sacrifice that was made and how sin can now be forgiven.

We thank You for your Grace and Mercy upon us, unmerited by us but freely given by You nonetheless. We confess that there have been times where we have not fulfilled our promises to you. We have not been faithful in prayer and the study of your Word. We have not been faithful in Worship or in Service to the proclamation of the Gospel. And we have sometimes shied away from your call upon us to bear witness to the Saving Grace of our Lord Jesus before others, fearful of what others might say, embarrassed to admit our faith in public at times when it is not popular to be seen doing so.

Grant us the courage and conviction of your First disciples Gracious God. Empower us by the presence of your Spirit, endowing us with a confidence to speak of our faith and act out our faith before all whom we come in contact

with us having that soul refreshing view of Jesus and his Word To us and for us.

Bless all whom we come in contact with this day, our family, our friends those whom we have worked with over the years. Be with those who live roundabout us and the fellowship to which we belong. Bless the work that is done here in Park Church as week to fulfil it to the glory of your name. We remember before you those in the fellowships roundabout us, the URC, Orchardhill, Giffnock South, Thornliebank, Carnwadric and Eastwood.

We pray for those in positions of high office and responsibility impacting the lives of so many. We pray for your wider church both near and far, those struggling with the impact of the Pandemic, those enduring persecution and violence, those living in a land of plenty and especially those living in land where there is not enough. We pray for those who suffer from illness and disease, whether here in our own land or in distant lands across the world.

For these best and worst of times we simply pray that you would come upon these lands and situations and people. Bring that sense of Consoling love and comforting presence, bring about your peace in times of violence; calm in times of uncertainty. We pray for the great Healer's touch in those lands here human medicine has failed. Most of all we seek faith for the faithless and hope for the Hopeless for all this we ask in Jesus' name... Amen.

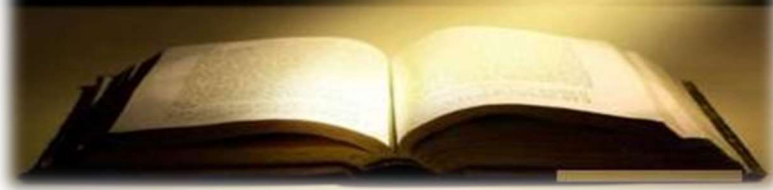
A car mechanic's favourite Hymn



A Warm Church Welcome



1 John 3:1-15



1 John 3:1-15

New International Version

3 See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ² Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, ^[a] we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. ³ All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

⁴ Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. ⁵ But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. ⁶ No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

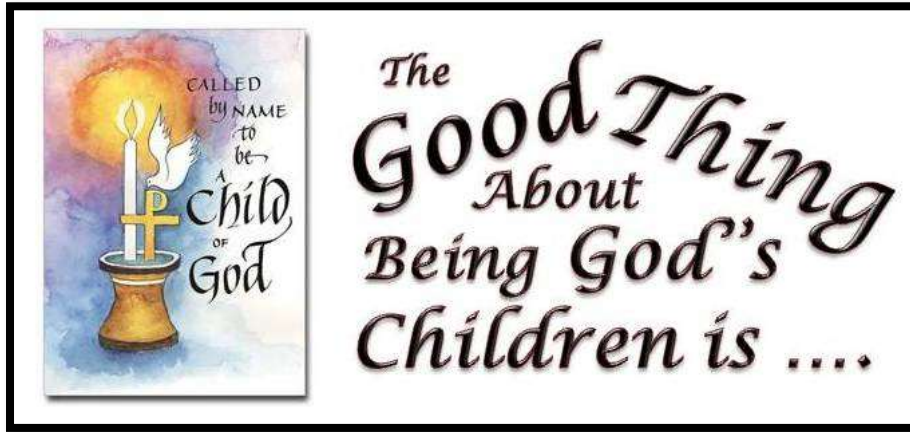
⁷ Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. ⁸ The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. ⁹ No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God. ¹⁰ This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God's child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister.

More on Love and Hatred

¹¹ For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.

¹² Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. ¹³ Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, ^[b] if the world hates you.

¹⁴ We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. ¹⁵ Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.



Good morning,

I wonder if you have ever considered what it means to be a Christian. Is it something of great significance or is it about the mindset that so many others seem to have today, like that of joining a club of some sort? I sometimes watch the Jeremy Vine Show which is on just at the end of the breakfast news programmes. I find it at times to be quite interesting as they try to discuss with members of the general public along with their so called select panel of "experts" for the day, about some of the more topical stories hitting the headlines, for example, the current debate about expenses and flat decoration by the Prime Minister Boris Johnstone; the rights and wrongs of that situation, whether we are going out of lockdown too slowly or too quickly, whether it was right for the Duke & Duchess of Wessex to withdraw formally from public engagement and go live elsewhere in the world, to name but a few.

Sometimes I found myself nodding in agreement with the panel while on other occasions I found myself wanting to throw a shoe at the television listening to the nonsense they sometimes come away with. Last week on one of the shows, there was a discussion during which Jeremy Vine made a comment about how one of the panellists might want to go to church instead. Her response both perplexed and vexed me in that she was so dismissive about going to church because "She had better things to do with her time - like shopping" I couldn't help but think that she had a rather presumptive arrogance when it came to her standing in the eyes of the Almighty on the one hand or a complete lack of understanding of God, his Son Jesus, the significance of Easter for the world resulting in her being so dismissive towards the central message of the Christian Story. I could not help but think that she firstly, needs to realise as Paul the apostle put it, that "we have **ALL** sinned and **FALLEN SHORT** of God's Glory" (Romans 3: 23) and then secondly, to resolve the issue, "God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten

Son that **WHOSOEVER** believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3: 16).

I was left with a distinct conclusion that she had no real idea of how important it is for her and for those of every generation who have not worked out that they all need the saving grace of the one and Only Saviour of the World and that to do that they only need put their trust in Him. The other thing is to realise what it means to be accepted as a Child of God, how and why this is a good thing to listen to someone so dismissive, she clearly had no idea of what we believe and why we believe it and this brings me to the theme of our reflection today. **Why is it a good thing to be a Child of God?** I could not help but think of the words of an old hymn from the Moody and Sankey Era;

*I stand amazed in the presence,
Of Jesus the Nazarene,
And wonder how He could love me,
A sinner, condemned, unclean
How marvellous! How wonderful!
And my song shall ever be
How marvellous, how wonderful!
Is my Saviour's love for me!*

The Key Verse for our thinking today is born out of 1 John 3: 1 where we read, ***"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him."*** How marvellous and how wonderful this love of God is and the extent to which has been and still is willing to go. Stuart Townend has made these words come alive again when we begin to think of the Depth of God's love for and "how vast beyond measure" it truly is.

For the Christian of every generation we can see 4 facets; the Greatness of our Dignity; our distinctiveness is marked above others; A Destiny awaits us and that we have a Call to Duty.

The Greatness of our Dignity

We have received a step up as men and women of faith in Jesus. Many today will make a remark about us all being God's Children. This is not what the Bible teaches. We may be seen as in the eyes of Robert Burns to be "all Jock Tamson's bairns" but in the eyes of God Almighty we are very much a part of and a very much beloved part of Creation but we are not all his children. In the Old Testament the People of Israel were chosen by Him as the weakest

and least significant of all the tribes and people and their great claim was to be the Chosen People of God but they were not his Children. This was to be one of the great controversies that Jesus would cause in his ministry for the religious establishment, that for the first time we might call upon Him in such personal and intimate terms that we can call Him "Abba - Father". Reading Verse 1 on 1 John 3 gives the game away very distinctly.

"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!" I Don't know often or if ever you have been promoted in your job but in talking after church one Sunday I was reminded of a film called the secret of my success starring a very young Michael J Fox. His character in the story begins working in the basement where the mail room was and as the story unfolds he reveals the secret of his success in moving in the period of months that lie ahead from being the mail boy in the mailroom in the basement of the building to the CEO of the Company sitting in the huge leather chair in the executive suite of the building on the top floor. His status changed from the lowliest worker to the top manager of the firm. The Believer's standing in God's eyes is far greater than this could ever be and far more immediate. One moves from being in a state of deserved judgement to one of Unmerited Grace in that moment the story of faith in Jesus begins. In that instant we move from being part of God's much loved but broken Humanity to being more than just God's Chosen people but part of his family having a status akin to that of the son of God himself - we have become the brother or sister in Christ. To say the least the greatness of our dignity, of our standing in God's eyes has markedly changed.

Our Distinctiveness is Marked

"The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him." I think we need to set at the outset when we talk of the distinctiveness of the Christian it is not about superiority. That is the kind of nonsense that Fascism, White Supremacy and extreme Islamic belief is made of. To help us put this into context I think of the story of an interview between the then TV presenter Terry Wogan and the late but great Billy Graham in the 1980's as part of build up to Mission England. In that interview he was asked, "Are you a Saint?" His reply is one I have never forgotten. "I'm a saint but I ain't no saint!". When it comes to our distinctiveness we should stand out as different from everyone else. While many out of a goodness of their own may very well have a deep concern for the welfare of others, it is first and foremost our call to

love God but that we set aside a new priority of loving our neighbour as ourselves. When you see a Christian now who once was a liar, a cheat, a drunkard, an addict whose life was filled with brutality and misery but who now as a consequence of the transforming love of God emulates the very fruits of God's Spirit in his life making him or her, a very changed person from before. That is the marked distinction of the Christian. A life transformed in big and small ways to reflect the depth and vast resource of God's love. It is that difference that sets us apart not because we are better but because our focus is on that of the Saviour and his call upon us and a desire to serve Him only. Billy Graham was right - our saintliness has nothing to do with it because it can never qualify us.

I have always felt that when working with Glasgow Street Pastors one of the things that always stood out when out traipsing the streets was that of a Christian presence looking willing to not only speak of the things of Christian faith but to demonstrate faith in action that marked distinctiveness to go an extra mile for someone else just as our Saviour did for us.

A Destiny Awaits us

There are several things that makes this clear: In the opening words of John 14 we read how Jesus having risen from the dead makes a promise, **"I will come back and take you to be with me"**. The promised return of Jesus sits as one of the great central hopes of the Christian Church. Secondly we will see Jesus as He Really is. A glimpse of that is seen in that moment on Mount Sinai that is referred to as the transfiguration sees Jesus' very form changes



in that great meeting of minds with Elijah the prophet and Moses. Artist have imagined what that moment was like across the centuries but one of the things that is spoken of in 1 John 3: 2 is that not only will we see the return of Jesus in all his Glory but the promise is that we shall see him as He is in all his glory and the real moment to savour is that "we shall become like Him" (1 John 3: 2).

We have a Call of Duty

We have not just seen an elevation in Status in God's eyes and we are now set as people distinctively different from the rest of the world in God's eyes, not only do we have a destiny to look forward to with hope like no other but we can see that we also have a Call of Duty. So many songs have been written for the popular culture of the day talking and singing of a love that everyone wants to make known to the world. We wear an engagement ring or a wedding ring on our finger as an outward sign to all that there is one that you love above all others. How is it that for many nominal Christian folk, the idea of proclaiming the eternal love of God to all who will turn in faith to Jesus is so difficult? We must find that passion for Jesus' love for us again. We must find the means by which the people we come in contact with can see that distinctive Christian Witness again in our lives. They need to be able to see their need for God's love and the overwhelming desire of God to share that love with them. But they also need to know that their hope for eternity at the moment hangs in the balance of how they respond to the call of Jesus Christ to turn and believe that sins can be forgiven and eternity secured and lives can be transformed that we might be like Him who loved us and gave himself for us. Maybe the old hymn writer sums it up nicely

*God loved the world of sinners lost
And ruined by the fall;
Salvation full, at highest cost,
He offers free to all.*

Just a simple thought for us this week
Every blessing this week.

Calum

*May the Love of God
draw you to Himself;
May the Power of God
strengthen you in His
service;
May the Joy of God
fill your hearts;
And may the Blessing
of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and
the Holy Spirit,
be among you
and remain with you
always.
Amen.*

