

*Giffnock the Park Church
Sunday 30th May 2021*



Good morning and welcome to another Sunday Devotional. Given the length of time our pandemic situation has taken, I am sure we would all identify with the sentiment, 'Another day, another dollar'. This proverbial phrase was a weary resignation that the day to come will be one of tedious work, the only benefit being the small amount of payment at the end of it. The origin of this old saying is understood to have been an American nautical expression from the 19th century dating back to times when sailors were paid a dollar a day. On long voyages each day was so similar to the last and all that the seamen would have to show for a day's work was one more dollar in their pocket. All these years on, rates of pay have got better, conditions of the workplace have improved and the expression now is used more to convey a feeling of being fed up and after 15 months of restriction and lockdown - who could possibly blame anyone for feeling fed up - even just a little bit.

What is there to look forward to in these days to come? The precious holiday in the sun may very well be a bust with restrictions on travel still in play. The constant reviews of travel, health and economic recovery from Covid-19 in all its variance have left many frustrated, and for those that have been in the front line of our hospitals and care homes, I am sure we have yet to see the post traumatic stress of all this to come to the fore.

Where do people's hopes lie? I worry that for so many in the UK who now are too busy to give God and in particular his Son, our Saviour, a second glance that they can no longer see where true Hope lies. I worry that the gospel may be drowned out by all the voices crying to be heard. I worry that our National Church is so wrapped up in contending with the ripple effect of the Pandemic on Finance, on everyday church life and how their strategic planning has been thrown into utter chaos that they have lost sight of our reason for being. I worry that the National Committees and Councils of the Church, many in our Presbyteries, our ministers and congregations have lost their evangelical zeal. Ministers when being ordained to their charge are

asked, **“Are not zeal for the glory of God, Love to the Lord Jesus Christ, and a desire for the salvation of all, so far as ye know your own heart, your great motives and chief inducements as you enter into this ministry?”** The quick and enthusiastic reply for the minister is made in two words - **“They Are ! ”**

Now you might say that every minister should answer in such terms but the reality is that the call to faith and life in Jesus asks that very question of every one of us who professes a Christian Faith. We ALL should have a zeal for the glory of God and a love for his Son, Jesus our Saviour. Everyone one of us, Minister, Elder and Church Member alike should ALL have a desire “for the Salvation of everyone”, these should be the great motives and chief inducements of our daily lives. This is our primary *raison d'etre* - dare I say it, it even trumps the great issues of the day like Global Warming, Social Injustice, Persecution and all the other great social maladies of Humanity. Where do People’s hopes lie? Where does your Hope lie?

For me I turn to God’s Word to remind myself of these things and I have noted a number of bible references that might helps us be reassured where our and others' hopes may lie - homework for each day this week.

Have a great Week
Calum

	Bible Reference	
Monday	Psalm 31:24	Be strong and let your heart take courage, All you who hope in the Lord.
Tuesday	Romans 12: 12	¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.
Wednesday	Hebrews 10:23	Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful
Thursday	Romans 15:13	Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
Friday	1 Timothy 4:10	For it is for this we labour and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of believers.
Saturday	1 Timothy 4:10	For it is for this we labour and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of believers



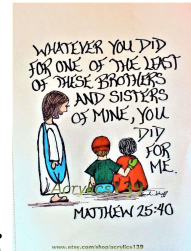
The Park Church Bulletin Board

Sunday 6th June

The Service next Sunday will be conducted by Mrs Ann Smith as I will be conducting a Communion Service at St Christophers Priesthill & Nitshill there as they begin the story of Vacancy with the Retirement of their Minister.



Carnwadric Church Foodbank Shopping List



UHT milk, Sugar, Coffee and Diluting Juice along with tinned products such as:- Tinned carrots or peas Custard, Rice pudding, Fruit, Spaghetti, Baked Beans, Soups plus Tinned 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.



To prevent congestion at the Door and thus maintain Social Distance Please give advanced notice of your intention to attend Church that Sunday. This is very important and easy to do. Simply contact Bert or Sandra Dickov on either 01413168143 or 07947611412

Although in Tier 2 of the Lockdown Protocol, please remember to follow the one way system in place, social distance, sanitisation, wearing a mask, etc for everyone's safety.

Daily Prayer

*So far today, Lord, I've done all right.
I haven't gossiped, haven't lost my temper,
haven't been greedy, or grumpy, nasty, or
self-centered.*

*I'm really glad about that. But in a
few minutes, Lord, I'm going to get out of bed,
and then I'm going to need a lot of help.
Thank you.*

"Of All Things, Guard Against Neglecting God In The
Secret Place Of Prayer."

William Wilberforce

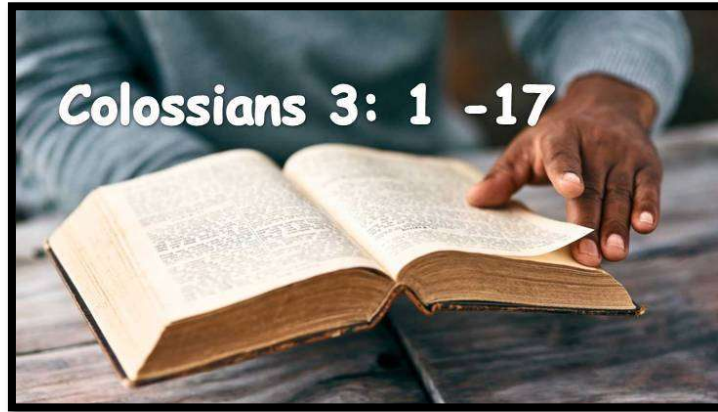
Our God and Father in Heaven, we come before you this morning to express our thankfulness and devotion as we acknowledge the lengths that you have gone to in order to bring us back into fellowship with you. We recognise the enormous cost that this was to You in giving your Son as the Ransom for many - all with the purpose of demonstrating your great Love and mercy upon us. Heavenly Father as we come before you now see within our hearts the true sense of our love for You which we know cannot even begin to compare with your love for us. We come to once again seek your face that we might be inspired as you speak to our hearts through your Word seeking that it prepares us for the calling you have placed on each of our lives.

As a Fellowship within Your Worldwide Church and as individuals, we recognise that we have not always been consistent in living our lives for your Glory. There have been times when we have been distracted from You, we have acted in a manner that does not honour You and have often said things we shouldn't or have not spoken up when we should. Forgive us Loving God and help us to do better that others may see the risen Jesus living in us and through us, that they may see the marvel of your Grace at work. As we seek your forgiveness for ourselves, we pray that we might be equally forgiving to others.

Empower us by the leading of your Holy Spirit to understand you more and teach us through the wisdom of Your Word how we might serve you better. Help us to be ones who can put faith in Jesus into practice with a willingness on our part to declare your Love to all who will listen.

Be with each one in our families and speak to their hearts of a Saviour's love, be with all who mourn a loved one's passing and who seek reassurance about the things of eternity. Move among those within our own land and beyond where injustice is rife, where violence is commonplace and fear is all around. Bestow upon all who need it that sense of your healing power at work and allow your Peace to calm anxieties and fear at play and make revival of the gospel a story that is world changing. As a new week begins Gracious God bless all that is done in Christ's name That the world may glorify your Holy name now and always .

This we pray in Jesus' name Amen



Colossians 3:1-17

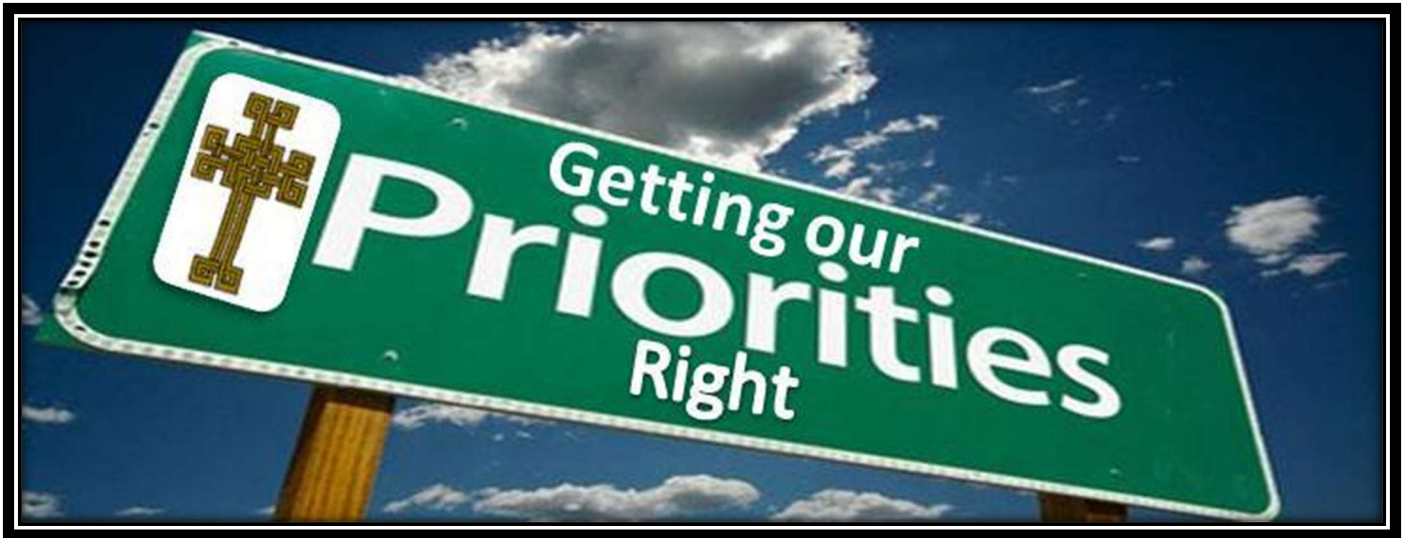
Living as Those Made Alive in Christ

3 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your^[a] life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

⁵ Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.^[b] ⁷ You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. ⁸ But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. ⁹ Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. ¹¹ Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.



We will all have been told at some point in our lives - 'You need to get your priorities right!' Perhaps because of the times we have been living through and the impact of all that has happened, the theme of getting our priorities right seems a good place to begin a new session of studies over the subsequent weeks that follow. I have been drawn to one particular part of the New Testament, the letter of Paul to the Colossians, perhaps not the most well known or popular of his letters but no less significant for us. Our focus will zero in on Chapter 3 and the first 17 verses which takes up the first two thirds of the chapter.

Our key verses for this morning are the opening verses (vs 1-4) where he writes; "*set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.* ² *Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.*" In reading these words I could think of no better title than **Getting Our Priorities Right**. To Help us along with that I wanted to share this somewhat flippant illustration which I feel makes the point quite well.



The story is told of two friends who go hunting deer in the woods. Some hours later as night was falling, only one of them returns to the cabin where they were staying and on his shoulders is the most enormous deer stag which he was clearly struggling to carry. His other friends came out hearing him offload the dead stag onto the front of the Porch and one of them asks - "Where's Johnny?"

The first hunter simply replies, "Oh he's just a little distance further up the trail but he's taken a stroke and he can't move. With raised concern and a wee bit of anger, they then asked, as they went to get their jackets and boots, "Why did you leave him behind?"

He simply replied, "Well nobody was going to steal Him!!"

The point is easy to follow - He had not fully understood his priority - that it should have been for the welfare of his friend. There are three Priorities for our reflection on Colossians Chapter three today:

1. The setting of the Priority of Salvation in a world that would see its priorities lying elsewhere. **(Col 3: 4 - Christ who is your life)**
2. The Priority of being Heavenly minded **(Col 3: 2 -set your minds on things above)**
3. The Priority of not being Earthly minded **(Col 3: 2 - not on earthy things)**

Colosse was not as big city as it used to be by the time of Paul. It was more of a town sitting in the shadow of two much larger cities close by, Hierapolis and Laodicea in what is now modern day Turkey but was then Asia Minor. It was still a vibrant trading route and many would come and many would go from Colosse. This was not a fledgling congregation that Paul was credited with having founded. Some have argued it was in fact his companion on the journey Epaphras, that he brought the Gospel to them. Most scholars would agree that his letter was written from prison and that he was anxious to help the congregation mature in their faith particularly when they were under the potential influence of Greco/Roman life which was wildly immoral. The expectant pressures within were also an issues of gentile understandings verses the rituals of Judaism. So Paul writes to try and offer sage advice for these young and immature Christians.

The Priority of Salvation

There is an old legend told of a swan and a crane where a beautiful swan steps onto the bank of the river and waddles over to where a crane was wading about seeking snails in the muddy riverbank. For a few moments the crane viewed the swan before asking: "Where do you come from?"

"I come from heaven!" replied the swan.

"And where is heaven?" asked the crane.

"Heaven! Have you never heard of heaven?" said the swan, to which the Crane Said "No!"

The Swan then went on to describe the grandeur of the Eternal City. Where it spoke of streets of gold, and the gates and walls made of precious stones; of the river of life, pure as crystal, upon whose banks is the tree whose leaves shall be for the healing of the nations. In eloquent terms the swan sought to describe the hosts who live in the other world, all the while failing to arouse the slightest interest on the part of the crane. Finally the crane asked: "Are there any snails there?"

"Snails!" repeated the swan; "No! Of course not."

The crane, as it continued its search along the banks of the muddy river bank, turned to the swan and said "You can have your Heaven. I want snails!"

This fable has a deep truth underlying it. Like the Crane, many people both young and old today will fill their lives with all sorts of things other than the Priority of Eternal Salvation. Like the Crane they would rather forfeit Heaven for snails instead.

In the early days of the church, the desire of all then was to reach as many people as they can with the Message of God's unmerited favour and Grace in the story of the Risen Jesus. What has happened across the years that we in churches across Scotland have lost that fervour? When will we look to find what the hymn writer described as, **"the Blessedness when first I saw the Lord"**

As individual church members and as a congregation, as a Presbytery and as a National Church, we all need to find the means to ask the great question of Ordination;

"Are not zeal for the glory of God, Love to the Lord Jesus Christ, and a desire for the salvation of all, so far as ye know your own heart, your great motives and chief inducements as you enter into this ministry?" More importantly we need to get to the place where we can all answer and say - 'They Are !'

The Priority of Being Heavenly Minded

Conformity is the order of the day in this age that we live in. The rising Woke culture is not really interested in allowing people to agree to disagree without being disagreeable. The politically correct mania impacting every strata of social life becomes very uncomfortable when the light of God's words challenges what they want to say and do at times.

In Greco Roman society way back then, there was much to distract one from the things of Faith in Jesus. The Worship of Caesar as Emperor of Rome, the plethora of Roman and Grecian Gods involving all sorts of licentious

acts and behaviour made places like Colossae a wild place to be. Paganism of every kind was round every corner. Paul understood the great temptations in all this and so sought to give guidance as what the priority was for them - namely that they be heavenly minded.

It might be best summed up in the Words of the Chorus that many of you, like me, will remember from Sunday School,

When The Road Is Rough And Steep Fix Your Eyes Upon Jesus.

He Alone Has Power To Keep, Fix Your Eyes Upon Him.

Jesus Is A Gracious Friend, One On Whom You Can Depend.

He Is Faithful To The End, Fix Your Eyes Upon Him.

The Priority now is what Christ offers and not what others can bring. The great Cathedral of Milan in Spain has three arched doorways that you can enter through. Over one is carved a beautiful wreath of roses, and underneath it is the inscription, "All that which pleases is but for a moment." Over the other is sculptured a cross, and there the words read, "All that which troubles us is but for a moment." But underneath the great central entrance to the main aisle is the inscription, "That only is important which is eternal." If we truly realise the significance of these three statements, we will not let trifles trouble us and not be interested in the passing pleasures of the hour. We would live instead for the permanent and the eternal. The great sermon on the mount that Jesus gave reminds us of this truth, "Seek first his kingdom and all these things will be added to you" (Matt 6: 33)

The Priority of not being Earthly minded

If our second priority is true then so too is our final thought for today - namely that if we are to be heavenly minded, we must by definition be prepared to give up that which is earthly. As we read our way through Chapter three we see how Paul creates lists of the positive and negative traits of life and Christian living some of which we will explore more fully in subsequent Devotionals. Suffice to say, what Paul is trying to communicate here is that we need to be about following Jesus more and listening to the world less.

Most people today are sucked into what someone once called the rat race which is all about getting on the stepladder of so-called progress and so you get your qualifications, you get a job, you work hard in that job, buy your first car, you get a better job and more money, get a bigger/better car, buy your first property, get a bigger/better property (preferably in a better neighbourhood). I have met individuals for whom social climbing is something

that is so important to them they will step on anyone, push everyone out their way to be seen in the right place with the right people.


When asked to do the Weekly Devotion at the Scottish Parliament a number of years ago I spoke of the great privilege it was but that I wasn't sure which privilege was greater, to offer something to those at the heart of Scottish politics or to preach to those in the cramped and crowded Men's Prison in Gulu in Northern Uganda a year earlier. There were some who were not best pleased in the Parliament at who they were being compared with. I can say that I have sat in the company of the great and also not so great. I have found it to be a most humbling thing to sit in the cold of night in the company of some who are living rough on the streets of Glasgow as we try to show some companionship and support for those who are among the most marginalised in society - no social climbing going on there.

Milan's Cathedral main archways sums the thoughts of Paul the apostle in the opening words of Chapter three aptly, "*That only is important which is eternal*". Earthly things will pass and fade. Try leaving your garden for 6 months unattended and see what happens as the driveway becomes covered over and the house obscured by a garden out of control. The core question is do you want the taste of Heaven or the taste of snails? Would you want for all who are friends, colleagues or family the hope of heaven or the destiny of the mudbank foraging for snails.

Some thoughts for you to ponder.

Have a great week

Calum



*May the Grace ,Mercy and Peace
of God the Father, God the Son,
God the Holy Spirit
remain with each one here
May His love surround us,
May His Spirit guide us,
May His Word encourage us,
May His peace calm us,
May His shield protect us,
His wisdom influence us.
And Wherever we may go
May we Know his presence
Now and always....*

Amen