

Stonehaven Carronside Church of Scotland

The Week's Reflections – Sunday 28th February 2021 – 10.30am

**A RECORDING OF THE LIVE SERVICE CAN BE WATCHED
FROM 10.30AM ONWARDS ON YOUTUBE**

THE LINK FOR THE YOUTUBE SERVICE IS: [HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/B4yWPBqk8N4](https://youtu.be/B4yWPBqk8N4)

OR FOLLOW THIS METHOD

GOOGLE – YOUTUBE – CARRONSIDE CHURCH – SELECT DATE

ORDER OF SERVICE

SERVICE LEADER -David Galbraith

ENTRANCE MUSIC: CH4 755 Be still and know that I am Lord

WELCOME

PRAISE: CH4 457 - "All hail the power of Jesus' Name"

PRAYER OF APPROACH based on the LORD'S PRAYER

BIBLE READING – Mark 8:31 – 9:1 – Hazel Paterson

PRAISE: CH4 192 - "All my hope on God is founded"

REFLECTION - Take up your cross - David Galbraith

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS – Carol Balsillie

PRAISE: CH4 255 – "Father, hear the prayer we offer"

BENEDICTION

Exit: Sung blessing: CH4 786 May the Peace of God go with us

This service will be followed by a Zoom Fellowship at about 11:15

The link for the fellowship is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82490489505?pwd=TIhiRWWh3L2pJMjQ1WGovT2xPOU9ldz09>

Reflections by David Galbraith

Hello and Welcome – Welcome to our Carronside on-line worship for Sunday 28th February 2021.

Many members of our church fellowship have now had their first vaccination for Covid-19, but others still need to be patient while they wait.

But regardless, we do now seem to be on our slow and hesitant journey back towards normality.

As we have been out of our normal life for almost a year now, it is easy to forget that some of the things we used to do to help those less fortunate than ourselves, so I am taking this opportunity to remind you that we are now in the middle of Fair Trade fortnight. And, of course to encourage you to buy fair trade products whenever appropriate.

We will be holding a Zoom Coffee Fellowship after this service, so please join us at the end of the premiere of this service, immediately after it finishes.

Psalm 22:25-27

From you comes my praise in the great congregation;
my vows I will pay before those who fear him.
The poor shall eat and be satisfied;
those who seek him shall praise the Lord.
May your hearts live for ever!

All the ends of the earth shall remember
and turn to the Lord;
and all the families of the nations
shall worship before him

PRAISE CH4 457

So let's start our time of worship together singing "All hail the power of Jesus' Name"

1 All hail the power of Jesus' name!
Let angels prostrate fall.
Bring forth the royal diadem,
and crown him Lord of all.
Bring forth the royal diadem,
and crown him Lord of all!

2 O seed of Israel's chosen race
now ransomed from the fall,
hail him who saves you by his grace,
and crown him Lord of all.
Hail him who saves you by his grace,
and crown him Lord of all!

3 Let every tongue and every tribe
responsive to his call,
to him all majesty ascribe,
and crown him Lord of all.
To him all majesty ascribe,
and crown him Lord of all!

4 Oh, that with all the sacred throng
we at his feet may fall!
We'll join the everlasting song
and crown him Lord of all.
We'll join the everlasting song
and crown him Lord of all.

PRAYERS OF APPROACH

Let us join near together and near to God in prayer

Let us Pray

Jesus Christ,

You disciples asked you how to pray, and through them you taught us:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Lord God, Creator God, Father God,

We have many ways to describe you, but each of them is insufficient to describe your might, insufficient to describe what you have done for us.

The Awesome wonder of this universe, the beauty of this planet, the oceans and the mountains.

How it all fits together, everything in perfect balance for us – and for all the plant life, all the birds and animals and fishes. So much that we cannot take it all in at any one time. So much that we can spend our lifetimes examining, and yet still only scratch the surface.

We are amazed by all this creation, and if it takes all our breath away to realise what we can see – then how much greater can be our admiration for you God?

You made us Lord God as part of that wonderous creation, but yet despite that we cannot comprehend your power, hallowed indeed be your name.

Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven,

We know, God, of your love and compassion for us, because you sent your son to us, as flesh and blood, to experience the full range of human emotion, to really know what we feel.

Yes Lord, the joy and the laughter, companionship, friendship, ambitions and their realisation, but also the pains – the heartache, what it is to grieve, what it is to suffer hardship, what it is to be tortured, not to be in control of a situation, mental anguish.

Lord, your kingdom is one of peace and welcome, we would have that peace and welcome, here on earth – available for every one – so Lord, make us your agents to be that change.

Give us today our daily bread.

Lord, we, here in Angus, have plenty to eat – and yet people go hungry. People rely on food banks to help them get by.

And elsewhere in this world there are people much worse off – those who do not even know if their will be food available for their next meal, even if they were to be able to afford it.

So God, we thank you, for all the food that is available, and let us be your agents again Lord, to lobby for food equality, to not just say thanks for the food on our plates, but also to help get food into all hands.

Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Where do we start Lord – can we list our sins without forgetting some of them – without ignoring some of our most grievous sins?

We have individual sins, the words we have said, or left unsaid, things we have done, or failed to do.

Those we failed to feed, those we failed to give refreshment to, those we didn't welcome with open arms, those we didn't clothe and keep warm, those we failed to comfort and nurse, those we didn't visit when they were imprisoned.

But Lord, on top of these there are our collective sins – the damage that we have done to your creation, burning fuel, throwing rubbish away, tolerating pollution.

So Lord, help us make amends – to start making steps to save this place you lovingly created for us.

And Lord, help us to forget those grudges we bear against others for those times we feel they have slighted us – and those times when they have done us ill – Lord, all we need is you, and no one but ourselves can take away that bond between us.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours.

Lord God, we are your people,
We acknowledge your kingdom, and thank you for offering us sanctuary in it.
Your Power and Glory continue to amaze and comfort us,
So Lord God, by following the example of you Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, we
dedicate ourselves to you again,
Now and for ever.
Amen.

I now invite Hazel to read our scripture this morning

SCRIPTURE

Mark 8:31 – 9:1: Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.' And he said to them, 'Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with power.'

PRAISE: CH4 192 Our next hymn is played for us by Albert Bil and is "All my hope on God is founded"

1 All my hope on God is founded;
he doth still my trust renew.
Me through change and chance he guideth,
only good and only true.
God unknown,
he alone
calls my heart to be his own.

2 Human pride and earthly glory,
sword and crown betray his trust;
what with care and toil he buildeth,
tower and temple, fall to dust.
But God's power,
hour by hour,
is my temple and my tower.

3 Daily doth th' Almighty giver
bounteous gifts on us bestow;
his desire our soul delighteth,
pleasure leads us where we go.
Love doth stand
at his hand;
joy doth wait on his command.

4 Still from earth to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done,
high above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ his Son.
Christ doth call
one and all:
ye who follow shall not fall.

REFLECTION

Take up your cross.

Thank you to Hazel for reading the scripture this morning.

Our scripture today in Mark Chapter 8 follows on directly from Peter's declaration that Jesus is the Messiah, and Jesus warning to all his disciples not to tell anyone of that.

Jesus then went on to tell the disciples that he must be killed. This was obviously unsettling for all the disciples, but it was Peter, the first of the disciples to be picked, that spoke out – as it says in the scripture (depending on which version you read) “Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him”.

It is all too easy to be harsh of Peter for saying this, but whatever Peter said, he didn't say it out loud in front of the other disciples. In accordance with the practice of the time, the disciples were students of their Rabbi, their master, learning from him, as just as when we were students at school or college, sometimes we didn't quite

understand something – or maybe wanted to make sure that we heard correctly – sometimes we want a quiet word with our teacher or lecturer to clarify things in our own mind.

Peter has just declared that he believed that Jesus was the Messiah, and the conventional thinking of a messiah in those days, was someone that was going to lead the Jewish people to greatness, to victory, to overcome their enemies of which the Roman Empire was right up there at the top.

So if, by this understanding, the messiah was to be killed, how could he achieve for them the desired greatness.

Although what Peter said to Jesus was said quietly, Jesus response was more public, he had turned back to the disciples, because he knew that what Peter had said was what all of them were thinking. None of them wanted him to die, all of them thought he had to live to be able to accomplish his mission – to fulfil what he had come to earth to do.

“Get thee behind me Satan”, as it says in the King James Bible, is, perhaps unfortunately, one of the better known quotations from Jesus. Is Jesus really telling Peter to go away? Is Jesus annoyed with Peter just because he has vocalised what they were all thinking.

We are in the season of Lent – the time when we specifically recall the time that Jesus spent alone before starting his ministry, the time when he tempted by other things he could do with his life – he could have a comfortable life – or he could follow God’s purpose – a purpose that needed to end with his death, because without dying, he couldn’t come back.

But Jesus was wholly a man, as well as being Son of God. As a man he suffered and enjoyed all the emotions of humankind. And one of those emotions is, of course, fear.

Jesus knows that following his path will, must, lead to his death, but he also knows that it is not too late for himself, Jesus, to walk away, to avoid that painful and humiliating death.

Peter was voicing human concerns – human emotions – emotions that were shared by Jesus and which Jesus had to suppress, to put at the back of his mind, while he carried on along the path that God had sent him to walk – the path that had to end in his death.

Human thoughts, not God’s thoughts.

Knowing that the disciples were distracted by human thoughts, knowing that Jesus also had human thoughts as well as Godly thoughts means that we sometimes have to reflect on our own thoughts.

And Human thoughts are a lot easier to come to than Godly thoughts – or at least, human actions are a lot easier than Godly actions.

It is about separating what we want – our human thoughts – from what God wants.

It should be easier for us than it was for those disciples, because we know what happened at that first Easter morning – we have had it explained to us.

Before Jesus Death and Resurrection, the early disciples didn't know what was coming.

Jesus was preparing them, but they wouldn't fully understand until sometime after Jesus Resurrection, and they would have to wait until the first Christian Pentecost before they could satisfactorily explain it to others.

But we have the hindsight of all that happened then, and of the lives of the first disciples, and all their teaching on top of the teaching of Jesus.

The Church of Scotland seems to be in turmoil at the moment.

We have known things have been difficult for a while, so the church decided to appoint a chief officer to handle the administrative details of the church, they appointed some trustees to oversee the more secular aspects of church life, and I think many of us have been appalled by what has been found.

The age profile of ministers has been highlighted in the numbers that are expected to retire in the next five years, the financial situation has been made clear to us.

And it has been made very clear that we cannot go on, just as we are.

So now we have to be very clear about our thoughts for the future of our beloved church at the local level.

We have to try to work out whether we are having human thoughts – what we want – or Godly thoughts – thoughts inspired by God enabling us to realise God's purpose in this parish.

What is our mission as Jesus' disciples?

Is our mission to provide worship for those who already believe, in buildings that are very dear to them?

Or is our mission to those who don't know Christ? Those to whom our church buildings are irrelevant, those who need our love, God's love through us, that they aren't getting at the moment.

Or is our mission some sort of compromise between the two?

Human thoughts or Godly thoughts?

Looking after ourselves, or looking after the whole body of God's children?

You will all know the term "Devil's Advocate". The Devil's Advocate was a formal position within the Roman Catholic church, and important when they were considering canonising someone – making someone a saint.

It was the Devil's Advocate's role to argue why that person shouldn't be made a saint, and if the Devil's Advocate's arguments could be overcome, then it was safe to proceed with the canonisation.

In our discussions about the shape of future church, in this community, in the Montrose area, across the whole of Scotland – does that discussion need a Devil's Advocate? Or does it need the exact opposite – a God's Advocate – to argue what God wants us to do to show God's love and to exercise the compassion that Jesus showed to all who needed it?

It will come at a cost – a personal cost – it may not be what we individually would humanly prefer.

But isn't that what Jesus was asking us to do when he told us to "take up our Cross and to follow Him?"

"For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it."

Our lives, the only one's worth living, are to follow Jesus, and love God and our neighbours as He would have us do.

Amen.

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS And now I invite Carol to lead us in our Prayers for Others.

PRAISE CH4 255 Our final hymn today is "Father, hear the prayer we offer"

1 Father, hear the prayer we offer:
not for ease that prayer shall be,
but for strength that we may ever
live our lives courageously.

2 Not for ever in green pastures
do we ask our way to be;
but the steep and rugged pathway
may we tread rejoicingly.

3 Not for ever by still waters
would we idly rest and stay;
but would smite the living fountains

from the rocks along our way.

4 Be our strength in hours of weakness,
in our wanderings be our guide;
through endeavour, failure, danger,
Father, be thou at our side.

CLOSE & BENEDICTION

Thank you for joining our fellowship today, and thanks of course to those who have helped with preparing the service.

Remember that there will be a Zoom Coffee get together at about 11:05, after this service finishes.

Go now in the righteousness of faith
and live by God's just demands.

Let nothing claim your devotion above the Lord,
and count nothing of value above knowing Christ.

Press on towards the ultimate prize, of being one with him.

And may God's perfect word revive your soul;

May Christ Jesus be your saviour and your rock;

And may the Holy Spirit strengthen you to press ever onward.

We go in peace to love and serve the Lord,

In the name of Christ.

Reflections by Ian Wilson

Dear Friends,

During the past year many of us have been unable to meet up with members of our families and thus perhaps one of the highlights of our week has been the telephone conversations and video calls from them which have given us so much comfort and happiness. This week the youngest member of my extended family had very important news which he wanted to share with Great Uncle Ian - yes, it was about getting back to school which for him is such a special time as he is now able to be with his friends again.

For children spending time with friends is so important as indeed it is for all of us. Our lives are greatly enriched through those friendships we have developed over the years and we are all looking forward to the time with our friends locally, nationally and

perhaps even internationally. When I think about friendship I am reminded of those words of Jesus to His disciples as recorded in John's gospel

"You are My friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer because the servant does not know what the master is doing but I have called you friends." John 15.14-15.

What an amazing message Jesus, the Incarnate Word of God calls us to be His disciples - and in so doing gives us that assurance that we are His friends, loved by Him and His Father. So let us constantly remember the importance of spending time with Him in the knowledge that His love for us is from everlasting to everlasting and His presence is closer to us than breathing. Let us celebrate His love as we reflect on Scriven's hymn "What a friend we have in Jesus". We know it as Hymn 746 so if you feel inclined why not sing it now.

HYMN 746 (CMP)

What a friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer!

Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
Can we find a friend so faithful
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden
cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Saviour, still our refuge!
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
Do thy friends despise forsake thee?

Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In His arms He'll take and shield thee,
Thou wilt find a solace there.

COLLECT FOR TODAY

Almighty God,
whose most dear Son went not up to joy
but first He suffered pain,
and entered not into glory
before He was crucified.
Mercifully grant that we,
walking in the way of the cross,
may find it none other
than the way of life and peace
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING - GENESIS 17.1-7; 15-16.

REFLECTION

"Standing on the promises of Christ my King
Through eternal ages let His praises ring,
Glory in the highest, I will shout and sing,
Standing on he promises of God.
Standing,standing,
Standing on the promises of God my Saviour
Standing, standing,
I'm standing on the promises of God."

In one of the conversations which John Knox had with Queen Mary 1 following her return to Scotland he reminded the Queen of the promises she had made. However, the reply she gave him was

"It is not up to subjects to remind Princes of their promises but it is up to Princes to decide which of their promises they desire to keep."

However, although earthly monarchs may well break promises we can be assured that Christ in God our Heavenly Father will indeed keep those promises and covenants which He has made with His people.

Last week we read how the Rainbow was the sign of God's promise His covenant with humanity - the sign first shown to Noah. Today we have read of God's Covenant with His people through Abraham, the father of nations. God's promise to Abram first mentioned in Genesis chapter 15 through the vision he experienced - is now confirmed in Chapter 17 - with that miracle through which the promise is fulfilled.

In chapter 15 we are told how Abram and his wife Sarai were childless and were also well advanced in years. In order to ensure the fulfillment of God's promise Sarai offered the services of her slave girl to Abram so that Abram would indeed have that opportunity to have descendants through her. Hagar did indeed have a son whom she called Ishmael but God again revealed Himself to Abram promising a son through his wife Sarai. Abram is told to "walk with God", thus to remain within God's presence and that the Covenant promise of descendants would be fulfilled. The name "Abram" - meaning "Father" or "Father of a nation" will be changed to the plural form "Abraham" not merely "Father of the Nation" but "Father of a multitude of nations" - and not only would Abraham be father of many nations but also was promised "nations and kings shall come from you (Genesis 17.7)

Then in verses 15 and 16 Sarai's name is also changed to the plural form Sarah "mother of many nations". She is to be the mother through whom God will create kings to rule over His people. God's people will look to Abraham and Sarah as their parents - remembering with thankfulness God's promises and His faithfulness to His children. The Apostle Paul, descendant of the tribe of Benjamin confirm that through faith not only are the Jewish race the recipients of God's promises through their father Abraham but the whole Church have through Christ have become spiritual sons and daughters of Sarah and Abraham. (Romans 9)

As we reflect on the promises of God to Abraham let us acknowledge His mighty power and His goodness towards humankind through the words of Thomas Oliver's hymn. We know this hymn as Hymn 162 so if you feel inclined why not sing it now.

HYMN 162 (CH4)

The God of Abraham praise
who reigns enthroned above,
Ancient of everlasting days
and God of love.

Jehovah, Great I am
by earth and heaven confessed,
I bow and bless the sacred name
for ever blest.

The God of Abraham praise
at whose supreme command
from earth I rise and seek the joys
at His right hand.
I all on earth forsake,
its wisdom, fame and power,
and Him my only portion make
my shield and tower.

He by Himself has sworn,
I on His oath depend
I shall on eagle's wings upborne,
to Heaven ascend.
I shall His power adore
and sing the wonders of His grace
for evermore.

There dwells the Lord our King
the Lord our Righteousness,
triumphant o'er the world and sin
the Prince of Peace;
on Zion's sacred height
His kingdom He maintains
and glorious with His in light
for ever reigns.

The whole triumphant host
give thanks to God on high;
Hail Father, Son and Holy Ghost!
they ever cry:

Hail Abraham's God and mine!
I join the heavenly praise -
all might and majesty are Thine,
through endless days.

NEW TESTAMENT READING - MARK 8.31-38

REFLECTION - GETTING THE CORRECT ANSWER IS NOT THE FULL STORY

Did you enjoy maths at school - do you remember getting multitudes of problems to work out? It was of course very satisfying to be told by the teacher that you had got the right answers for the sums you were given. However, it was never quite enough to show the right answer, you also had to be able to demonstrate how you had reached that answer. Your teacher would look through everything you had written in order to be able to have a much clearer idea of your mathematical ability.

Today's reading from the Gospel of Mark gives us an insight into the mind of the Apostle Peter and his relationship with Jesus. There is no doubt that being within Jesus constant presence and serving his master faithfully that Peter had obtained insight into who Jesus was. In Mark chapter 8 we are told how Jesus posed the questions "Who do people say I am?" (verse 27) "Who do you say I am?" (verse 29).

Although the questions were put to the disciples as a group it was Peter, as spokesperson who replied "You are the Messiah" (verse 29). Peter had indeed given Jesus the correct answer - Jesus was indeed the Messiah, the Christ, the one recognized as King - the one who would restore God's people to their true destiny - the one who would bring the reign of God on earth.

However, after acknowledging that Peter had indeed given the correct answer Jesus began to give details of how the Kingdom of God would be established through the suffering of the one born to be King. These details of how God's Kingdom is coming is not a message which Peter wants to hear - the desire for that triumphant rebel political leader who would throw off Roman tyranny and establish God's people is what is uppermost in Peter's mind. He thus wishes to persuade Jesus to adopt his own perspective on the concepts of Messiah and the Kingdom of God. However, we are told how Jesus 'rebuked' Peter, "Peter, you are wrong - you are looking at things from a mere human perspective - you need to understand the full story and see things through God's perspective.

The Kingdom of God will be established through the suffering of the King. Jesus, the Messiah gives details of how He is to suffer - a suffering which would lead to crucifixion, death and resurrection. Moreover, to be a disciple of the Messiah His followers would enter into His Kingdom through suffering - through the denial of self, through taking up the cross and following their master.

May God grant us the grace to follow our Lord where ever He leads knowing that in Him alone can we have life and have life in its abundance.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

Charles Everest's hymn "Take up your cross" recounts Jesus message to His disciples. We know it as Hymn 402 so if you feel inclined why not sing it now.

HYMN 402 (CH4)

'Take up your cross' the Saviour said
'if you would My disciple be:
take up your cross,with willing heart,
and humbly follow after me!'

Take up your cross; let not its weight
fill your weak soul with vain alarm:
His strength shall bear your spirit up,
and brace your heart, and nerve your arm.

Take up your cross, nor heed the shame,
and let your foolish pride be still
the Lord refused not even to die
upon a cross on Calvary's hill.

Take up your cross, then in His strength,
and calmly every danger brave;
it guides you to a better home
and leads to victory o'er the grave.

Take up your cross, and follow Christ,
nor think till death to lay it down;
for only those who bear the cross
may hope to wear the glorious crown.

May God richly bless us in the week ahead.

Ian

OFFERING.

If you would like to make your offering as a donation to Stonehaven Carronside Church of Scotland, you can do so easily on-line in the Church of Scotland web site

<https://cos.churchofscotland.org.uk/donate/>

Select "donate to a congregation"

Enter "Stonehaven Carronside"

Select Gift Aid if you pay tax and

Then go to payment details.

You may also make a donation by cheque in an envelope addressed our office at

Stonehaven Carronside Church of Scotland

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