

Stonehaven Carronside Church of Scotland

The Week's Reflections – Sunday 21st 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/x84eimaMAJE>

OR FOLLOW THIS METHOD

“GOOGLE – YOUTUBE – CARRONSIDE CHURCH – SELECT DATE)”

Reflections by Ros Marshall

You will find the service on YOUTUBE by searching for Carronside Church
This link will be live from 10:30am and will remain active and accessible once it is live

Entrance Music – ‘Dance of the Blessed Spirits’ (Quiet Music CD 9, Track 1)

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP: Ros Marshall

Let us draw close to God as we listen for his word from Psalm 25
Teach us your ways, Lord,
Make them known to us.
Teach us to live according to the truth,
For you are our God who saves us.
Our trust is in you.
Amen

Our first hymn this morning is a favourite of mine and after a cold winter, it heralds the feeling of Spring. CH4 212 or MP 467 ‘Morning has Broken’.

PRAISE: CH4 212, MP 467 ‘Morning has Broken’

George Marshall –Piano

Morning has broken
Like the first morning,
Blackbird has spoken
Like the first bird.

Praise for the singing,
praise for the morning,
praise for them, springing
Fresh from the Word!

Sweet the rain's new fall
Sunlit from heaven,
Like the first dew fall
On the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness
Of the wet garden,
Sprung in completeness
Where his feet pass.

Mine is the sunlight;
Mine is the morning,
Born of the one light
Eden saw play!
Praise with elation,
Praise every morning,
God's re-creation
Of the new day!

Lynne will now lead us in our prayer of approach.

ALL AGE PRAYER OF APPROACH and the LORD'S PRAYER

Lynne Pollard

Loving, faithful God,
Your love is absolute,
Your promises irrevocable.
We look up after a shower of rain,
Marvelling at the colourful beauty of your rainbow –
A reminder of your promise
And faithfulness to all generations.
Wherever we happen to be-
Wilderness, mountain or valley bottom – your Holy Spirit is with us.
We adore you, loving faithful God.
In the wilderness of today's world, we face many enemies, many temptations.
Forgive us for succumbing to selfishness, greed, lust, anger, power.

In difficult times, it is hard to keep our focus on you. Forgive us Lord and help us to remember your promises, keep our sight on your guiding hand and the eternal glory at rainbow's end.

God of all, we thank you for the amazing stories of the disciples, leaving everything to follow your Son.

Jesus, you call us now to follow you, to trust and rely on and have confidence in you.

Come, let us now cast our nets into the waters and offer to you our worship and praise.

Let us now join together in saying The Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven,

Hallowed be thy name.

Thy Kingdom come,

thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory Forever,

Amen.

We are going to use the reading today as a wee meditation.

As May reads, you will see in the background, the River Cowie, with its flowing waters. You might like to close your eyes and instead, imagine the River Jordan, with John the Baptist standing in the water baptising people. What can you see? What can you hear? Then, imagine a desert – a wild hot and desolate place. Think about what it would be like to be there.

BIBLE READING – Mark 1, 9-15

Read by May Arthur

'The Baptism and Temptation of Jesus'

Not long afterwards Jesus came from Galilee and was baptised by John in the Jordan. As soon as Jesus came up out of the water, he saw heaven opening and the Spirit coming down on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my own dear Son. I am pleased with you."

At once the Spirit made him go into the desert, where he stayed forty days, being tempted by Satan. Wild animals were there also, but angels came and helped him. After John had been put in prison, Jesus went to Galilee and preached the

Good News from God. "The right time has come," he said, "and the Kingdom of God is near! Turn away from your sins and believe the Good News."

The word of God for the People of God,

Thanks be to God.

Our next praise is **CH4 336** 'Christ is our light, the bright and Morning Star'. You may recognise the Scottish melody.

PRAISE: CH4 336 – 'Christ is our light, the bright and Morning Star'

George Marshall – Accordion (Music – Highland Cathedral')

Christ is our light! The bright and morning star
Covering with radiance all from near and far,
Christ be our light, shine on, shine on we pray
Into our hearts, into our world today.

Christ is our love! Baptised that we may know
The love of God among us, sweeping low.
Christ be our love, bring us to turn our face
And see in you the light of heaven's embrace.

Christ is our joy! Transforming wedding guet!
Through water turned to wine the feast was blessed.
Christ be our joy; your glory let us see,
as your disciples did in Galilea.

REFLECTION

May the words of my mouth and the meditation in my heart be acceptable to you, O lord, my strength and redeemer.

I imagine many of you will be familiar with the Television programme 'Who do you think you are'.

It is a genealogy series in which well-known people trace their family tree, often travelling to different areas and countries in order to follow their ancestors' footsteps. Family secrets and forgotten stories are revealed, some of which may be known to the celebrity and others, not.

I pose a question. How much do we know about ourselves? Have you ever delved back into family history and been amazed at some of the details you have discovered?

It has become a popular thing to do.

In the reading from Mark today, we are back in the time just after Jesus' Baptism in the river Jordan.

Mark tells us dramatic, action packed stories. He gives us the most vivid account of Christ's activities. He features facts and actions rather than teachings.

He puts Jesus entry, his casting out into the desert, right after his baptism.

We left the story of John baptising Jesus during my January reflection.

Today we find ourselves transported back to the next part of this story.

From the commentary by Reverend William Barclay, we find that Jesus' Baptism was the day of Decision. For thirty years he had stayed in Nazareth where he had faithfully done his daily work and discharged his duties to his home.

For a long time, he must have been conscious it was time for him to leave Nazareth and go out into the world. The emergence of John the Baptist was the sign he had been waiting for.

It was the moment that identified him and the moment of approval. From Mark, Verse 10 'as soon as Jesus came up out of the water, he saw the heaven opening and the Spirit coming down upon him like a dove. And a voice from heaven, 'You are my own dear Son. I am pleased with you.'

Immediately after this, the next verse tells us 'at once the Spirit made him go into the desert, where he stayed forty days, being tempted by Satan. Wild animals were there also, but angels came and helped him'.

Jesus was cast into the desert by the Spirit, the same Spirit who came upon him at his baptism. There he had to endure tough temptations.

We all endure temptations, and we often we tend to think of them as bad. However, they are not put before us to make us fall, but instead to strengthen us – hearts minds and souls.

Forty days is an amount of time used frequently in the Bible. It is not literally forty days but is indicative of a considerable time.

The word Satan in Hebrew means an adversary and in the Old Testament it is used for ordinary human adversaries and opponents. Through their captivity, the Jews learned something of Persian thought. Persian thought is based on the conception that in this universe there are two powers, a power of light and a power of dark. Satan came to be regarded as The Adversary par excellence. That is what his name means. Satan is the essence of everything that is against God.

Again, studying William Barclay's commentary, we read that Jesus faced the greatest of temptation in the desert wilderness. He had to decide how he was going to continue

his work. God was saying to him 'take my love to men and women; love them until you die for them; conquer them by this unconquerable love even if you finish up, on a cross.' At the same time, Satan was encouraging Jesus to do the opposite.

To identify fully with human beings, Jesus had to endure Satan's temptations. Jesus had to choose, at that moment, between the way of God and the way of the Adversary of God.

Driven into the wilderness of the desert by the Spirit, Jesus recognised a calling beyond himself, returning from that place, with the good news for all.

Looking back to my days at Sunday School, we used to sing this song.

'Jesus bids us shine with a pure clean light,
Like a little candle burning in the night.

In this world of darkness, so we must shine,
You in your small corner, and I in mine.'

These words are still appropriate now, in the situation in which we currently find ourselves. Lockdown and isolation have brought with them challenges we never imagined we would face. Everyone is affected in some way and there is a long way to go before life, as we have known it, will return.

With many church buildings closed for the foreseeable future, it is even more relevant that we know we are children of God and that we have a real purpose. We do not have to ask, 'Who do we think we are', thanks to Jesus, who at his baptism knew who he was, and what he was expected to do by God. So, too, are we in possession of the knowledge of whose we are and whom we can serve with love.

We are all 'children of God.'

Amen

This Sunday is the beginning of lent, and it is also 'Church Action on Poverty Sunday'. It is a perfect time to reflect on, and remember our Mission Partners, Suresh and Roja and all at India Village Ministries.

As they work tirelessly for others in Jesus' Name, may we continue our support for them with prayer and in giving.

Allan still has plenty of 'wee hoosies' which need filling.

May will now lead us in prayer.

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION – May Arthur

PRAISE: CH4 392 , MP 755 'When I survey the Wondrous Cross'

Performed by Tito Daramola.

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ, my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.

See! From his head, his hands, his feet,
sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small,
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my life, my soul, my all.

I would like to thank everyone who has helped to make this video service possible, including the work, in many cases, which goes on behind the scenes.

Thank you all.

BENEDICTION Ros Marshall

Creator God, you made us in your image
To be your people, wherever we go.
This coming week, whatever we experience,
Wherever we find ourselves,
Help us to know that you are with us,
Guiding, revealing, and sustaining, always.

And now may the blessing of God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit
be with us all forever,
Amen.

Postlude Music – 'Praeludium in D Minor' (Improvisation) (Quiet Music CD 4, Track 7)

Reflections by Ian Wilson

Dear Friends,

So many of you have been in touch with me saying how sorry you are about not having the opportunity to meet together as we used to and having those times after morning worship when we would share a cup of tea and conversation. I have been thinking of the times we have done this over the years and the chats we have had. One of the things that came to mind was that although there were several discussions regarding the sermon the minister had just spoken on, these occasions were considerably fewer in number when compared to the occasions when people wanted to speak about the Children's address. Perhaps more than anything it was not so much what the minister said when s(he) spoke with the children but rather the responses the children gave to what was being said. We all experience great delight when we hear the active participation of these young minds and yes we can indeed find a message in what they have said which enriches our faith and spiritual lives.

Many ministers make the decision that even on those occasions when no children can be seen within the congregation they nevertheless deliver their children's address knowing that the adults will again enjoy what Arabella Hanhey puts so well in her hymn

"The old, old story of unseen things above,
of Jesus and His glory,
of Jesus and His love."
(Hymn 628 CMP)

On those occasions when children are present with us in the sanctuary either sitting with their families or as a group with their leader at Kids at Carronside the children's address is usually followed by a children's hymn - sometimes one we all know from childhood, but on occasions one which may be unfamiliar to us and for which we have relied on the children to teach us. I was extremely grateful two years ago when during our Easter Day Service, Carol and the children from Kids Praise taught us a new song "My God Lives" complete with all the actions. Today as we turn aside from our daily tasks to reflect on God's word let us begin with thinking of one of the children's songs "Who put the colours in the rainbow?" We know it as Hymn 143 so if you feel inclined why not sing it now.

HYMN 143 (CH4)

Who put the colours in the rainbow?
Who put the salt in the sea?
Who put the cold in the snow-flake?
Who made you and me?
Who put the hump upon the camel?
Who put the neck on the giraffe?

Who made the hyena laugh?
Who made whales and snails and quails?
Who made hogs and dogs and frogs?
Who made bats and rats and cats?
Who made everything?

Who put the gold in the sunshine?
Who put the sparkle in the stars?
Who put the silver in the moonlight?
Who made earth and mars?
Who put the scent in the roses?
Who taught the honey bee to dance?
Who put the tree inside the acorn?
It surely can't be chance!

Who made seas and leaves and trees?
Who made snow and winds that blow?
Who made streams and rivers flow?
God made all of these!

May we continue to enjoy the beauty of God's creation whether on our solitary walks or in the company of our children.

COLLECT FOR TODAY

Almighty God
Your Son Jesus Christ
fasted forty days in the wilderness
and was tempted as we are
but did not sin.
Give us grace to discipline ourselves
in obedience to Your Spirit:
and, as You know our weakness
so may we know Your power to save
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

OLD TESTAMENT READING - GENESIS 9.8-17

REFLECTION - THE LIFTING OF LOCK DOWN

During these recent days the news bulletins which we have seen on our television screens and in the newspapers bring us elements of good news - the good news being that the number of additional cases of Covid are becoming fewer by the day and the achievement of NHS staff and volunteers within our community in rolling out the vaccine programme has been truly remarkable. However, when we listen to news briefings and the questions that are being put by journalists to the politicians and scientists is

"When will we be coming out of lock down?"

It is a question which is difficult at this moment for politicians to give a direct answer. However, I think we can be reassured that there will be a point in time when lock down will be a memory of 2020/21 as we move forward with our lives. Our reading today is a reading which contains good news "Lock down has been lifted!"

Yes, the story of Noah tells us about how he and his family had to go into lock down in the ark to escape a disaster which was about to befall the earth - not a pandemic but a flood which our story indicates wiped out the bulk of humanity - Noah and his family alone survived by following the rules by remaining in the home God had given them - the ark he asked Noah to build.

It was this small remaining group of people to whom God gave the commission to be

"fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth".

The story of Noah begins at Chapter 6 and continues to chapter 9 with Chapter 10 telling us about Noah's sons and the continuity of the people of God upon the earth. We read in Chapter 8 about the end of lock down.

"In the second month on the 27th day of the month the earth was dry. Then God said to Noah 'go out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons wives.' " (Genesis 8.14-16). This is then followed by a series of instructions to Noah (chapter 9.1-7) and today's reading takes up the story at verse 8 with God's promise - His Covenant - and the Rainbow His sign of that covenant between Him and His people. From that day onwards when God's people look at the rainbow they will bring to mind the grace and mercy of God - God has saved His people - the Rainbow is His sign. As long as humanity sees that rainbow in the sky they can thank God that even while complaining of the heavy rains they can reflect on the beauty they see in the rainbow and give thanks to God for His mercy and grace

At verse 8 we read

"Then God said to Noah and to his sons with Him. As for you I am establishing My Covenant with you and your descendants after you"

and again at verse 17

"This is a sign of the covenant that I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth."

As we look forward to that time of coming out of lock down and meeting together may we ourselves encourage all people to set aside times of Thanksgiving to God for delivery from the pandemic and for His continual blessings to us His people.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

As we reflect on the suffering we have endured over these past months let us remind ourselves of how despite everything God is continually with us caring for us with "a love that wilt not let me go". Let us reflect on George Matheson's beautiful hymn - particularly verse 3.

"I trace the rainbow through the rain, and feel the promise is not vain that morn shall tearless be"

We know his hymn as Hymn 557 so if you feel inclined why not sing it now.

HYMN 557 (CH4)

O Love that wilt not let me go.

I rest my weary soul in Thee,
I give Thee back the life I owe,
that in Thine, oceans depths its flow
may richer, fuller be.

O Light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to Thee,
my heart restores its borrowed ray,
that in Thy sunshine's blaze its day
may brighter, fairer be.

O Joy that seekest me through pain
I cannot close my heart to Thee,
I trace the rainbow through the rain
and feel the promise is not vain
that morn shall tearless be.

O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from Thee

I lay in dust life's glory dead,
and from the ground there blossoms red
life that shall endless be.

NEW TESTAMENT READING - ST MARK 1.9-15

REFLECTION

Today is the First Sunday in Lent - Lent being that period of 40 days (excluding Sundays) when Christians take time to reflect on their lives and their discipleship as they prepare to celebrate the Feast of Easter. The New Testament reading for First Sunday in Lent is the reading which tells us of Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness- that point in the earthly life of our Saviour following His baptism in the River Jordan and the beginning of His ministry among us.

When Jesus was baptized we are told that a voice was heard

"You are My Son, the Beloved with You I am well pleased" (Mark1.11)

As we reflect on our Lord's wilderness experience perhaps it is beneficial to look closely at this verse from the gospel. The verse is in fact a combination of two very famous Old Testament phrases, firstly from Psalm 2.7

"You are My Son, the Beloved"

and secondly Isaiah 42.1

"My chosen one in whom I delight"

The Psalm speaks of the son of God - originally in the Old Testament the idea of "son" referring to the whole nation of Israel - but here Jesus recognizes Himself as God's only Son.

The passage from Isaiah speaks of the Suffering Servant of Deutero-Isaiah. Thus as Jesus reflect on is earthly ministry He combines the role of Son of God with the role of the Suffering Servant. As Mark records later in his gospel

"The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10.45).

Jesus time in the wilderness is described as a time of being confronted by wild beasts but also a time when angels ministered to Him. As we journey through these weeks of Lent may we have the courage to face up to all that may confront us - through those wild beasts of pain, loneliness and terror as we reflect on our discipleship and may we all like Jesus experience the ministry of angels - that reassurance that despite of everything God is with us in our struggles as we work through His purpose for our lives.

God has not forgotten He is constantly upholding us through the power of His Holy Spirit. Amen. Thanks be to God.

The hymn which we always associate with the beginning of Lent is Symttan and Potts' hymn "Forty days and forty nights" which we know as hymn 337 so if you feel inclined why not sing it now.

HYMN 337 (CH4)

Forty days and forty nights
Thou wast fasting in the wild;
forty days and forty nights
tempted and yet undefiled.

Sunbeams scorching day by day;
chilly dewdrops nightly shed;
prowling beasts about Thy way;
stones Thy pillow; earth Thy bed.

Shall not we Thy sorrows share,
learn Thy discipline of will,
and like Thee, by fast and prayer
wrestle with the powers of ill?

And if Satan, vexing sore,
flesh and spirit shall assail,
Thou his vanquisher before
wilt not suffer us to fail.

Watching, praying, struggling thus,
victory ours at last shall be;
angels minister to us
as they ministered to Thee.

May God richly bless us in the week ahead.

With all kind thoughts,
Ian

OFFERING.

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