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PORTOBELLO BAPTIST CHURCH

Messenger

November 2010

A PASTOR'S THOUGHT

Sometimes as Christians, we are not so much in danger of losing sight of God as, ending up with a diminished view of Him – almost as if our God is too small. He is there, but we don't really expect all that much of Him, our faith is limited and predictable. We prefer to have low expectations rather than being disappointed.

The man in John's Gospel Chapter 5 who was about to be healed didn't seem to have any sense of anticipation that his life was about to be utterly and totally changed. As Jesus asks his incisive question, as to whether or not he wanted to be healed, the only answer that the man could come forward with was, as one commentator suggests – pathetic. All he is able to say that it was impossible for him to get to the pool quickly enough when the waters were stirred. There was certainly no suggestion that his faith contributed in some way to the miracle that was about to happen.

But it is so easy for us to stand at a distance and criticise the man. I am sure that there have been times in our lives when we too have decided that any possible change within a particular situation would be utterly impossible.

Let's not shackle God, put our limits on him. Having real faith within a difficult situation, can at times be hard and hope is the first casualty when we are slowly having to drag our feet through the valley situations in life. But God is still God. And that is just as true as far as our church situation is concerned as it is within our own individual lives and circumstances. After all the Scriptures would encouragingly remind us that everything is possible for the one who believes.

Rev Robert Gemmell

PULPIT SUPPLY

November	7th	11.00 a.m. 6.30 p.m.	Rev Robert Gemmell do
	14th	10.50 a.m. 6.30 p.m.	Rev Robert Gemmell do
	21st	11.00 a.m. 6.30 p.m.	Rev Douglas Hutcheon NO EVENING SERVICE
	28th	11.00 a.m. 6.30 p.m.	Rev Andrew Rollinson do
December	5th	11.00 a.m. 6.30 p.m.	Rev Robert Gemmell do

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

November	13th	3.00 p.m.	Lynne Brown at Duncan St. Baptist
	14th	10.50 a.m.	Remembrance Sunday
	16th	7.30 p.m.	Management Committee Meeting
	21st		113th Church Anniversary with a fellowship lunch following the morning service
	24th	7.30 p.m.	Quarterly Church Business Meeting

NEW WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING

Following the last Church Business Meeting there is a weekly prayer meeting in the Centenary Lounge every Tuesday morning between 10.30 a.m. and 11.30 a.m. All are very welcome.

Ewan Sinclair

TIME OF THE CHURCH'S GREATEST INFLUENCE

What have been the eras of the Church's greatest influence? What have been the moments of its most powerful impact on the world? Not the epochs of its visible might and splendour; not the age succeeding Constantine, when Christianity became imperialistic, and all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them seemed ready to bow beneath the sceptre of Christ; not the days of the great medieval pontiffs, when Christ's vicar in Rome wielded a sovereignty more absolute than that of any secular monarch on the earth; not the later nineteenth century, when the Church became infected with the prevailing humanistic optimism, which was quite sure that man was the architect of his own destinies, that a wonderful



utopian kingdom of God was waiting him just round the corner, and that the very momentum of his progress was bound to carry him thither. Not in such times as these has the Church exercised its strongest leverage upon the soul and conscience of the world: but in days when it has been crucified with Christ, and has counted all things but loss for His sake; days when, smitten with a great contrition and repentance, it has cried out to God from the depths.

— James S. Stewart, Scottish Preacher

BRAINY YAKKING:

Pray like a Reformer, A Garland of Four Strands

In his booklet, *A Simple Way to Pray*, Martin Luther describes his use of the Ten Commandments. He says, “I divide each commandment into four parts,” explaining that the Ten Commandments can be viewed as (1) a school book, (2) a song book, (3) a penitential book, and (4) a prayer book. Luther then teaches that these four aspects can be woven together for a single use, “thereby fashioning a garland of four strands.”



We too can construct such a garland by simply taking a single commandment and applying it to ourselves in four ways.

The first strand is instruction. With this strand we consider what God teaches us in the commandment, what we can learn about who God is, and what He requires of us.

The second strand is thanksgiving. With this strand we give thanks for the truths contained in the commandment.

The third strand is confession. With this strand we search out and acknowledge our failure to keep the commandment. Upon confession we repent and seek God’s forgiveness.

The fourth strand is Prayer. With this strand we petition God to help us to learn and obey the commandment, presenting our requests with humility, thanksgiving and confidence.

Having thus fashioned a “garland of four strands”, we may now finish or proceed to the next commandment and repeat the process depending on our circumstances, time and desires. Here, Luther offers two warnings that taken together may help us balance our prayer time.

The first is a warning against too little prayer, “The devil who besets us is not lazy or careless, and our flesh is too ready and eager to sin and is disinclined to the spirit of prayer.”

The second is a warning against too much prayer, “Take care ... not to undertake all of this or so much that one becomes weary in spirit. Likewise, a good prayer should not be lengthy or drawn out, but frequent and ardent.”

(taken from wretchedradio.com)

GREAT QUOTES with Kirk Cameron

God sometimes strips His people of their nearest and dearest earthly mercies – that they may the more prize, and the better taste – of spiritual and heavenly mercies!
God takes away uncertain riches – that His people may the more prize certain riches!
God takes away natural strength – that His people may the more prize spiritual strength!
God takes away the creature – that His people may more prize their Saviour.



~ Thomas Brooks

I have a friend who is turning 40 this year. I sent him a funny note that Ray Comfort sent me when I turned 35. It read:

Happy birthday. I'm honoured to have you as my friend, and wish you the best as your hair and teeth fall out and your muscles disappear. Life is like a roller-coaster. You begin with anticipation and excitement, go up, over the hill, and come down screaming, "I wanna get off!"

It's true that over time, God mercifully strips us of earthly and fleshly strength in order to grow our spiritual muscles and lift our focus to Heaven. The Bible says, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD." I'll admit it. I'm fighting the aging process like the Karate Kid, but am also learning to lean on the strong arm of God who has already won the battle over sin, decay, and death. When I am weak, then I am strong. His strength is made perfect in my weakness.



~ Kirk Cameron

BAPTIST UNION OF SCOTLAND PRAYER LINK

November	7th	Johnstone & Keiss
	14th	Kelso & Kilmarnock
	21st	King's Park (Glasgow) & Kirkintilloch
	28th	Kirkwall & Knightswood (Glasgow)