

WEEKLY BULLETIN

Sunday 31st January 2021

grantonchurch.org.uk

Granton



The Church of Scotland

Join this Sunday's service at 10.30am

By computer/smartphone - go to grantonchurch.org.uk and follow the link.

By telephone - just follow these steps:

- Phone 0131 460 1196
- Then enter the meeting ID : 982 2448 2457
- Then enter #
- Then enter the meeting password : 905841
- Then enter #

You will now be able to hear the service and you will also be able to speak to everyone as well if you wish.



facebook
LIVE

Catch up on Sunday Services

If you are not able to catch the service on Sunday mornings yet still want to catch the service later, we broadcast the services on Facebook Live. Check out the church website or go straight to our Facebook page.

People have been asking how they can support the ongoing work of the congregation. Go to the website and look at the top of the page where you will see a Donation button. Click it, then you will have a few options from contacting the Treasurer and giving direct or via card or click on the Paypal button. Your donation will help our church to keep making a positive impact on our community and beyond.

DONATE

Coming Up Next

The gospel is 'Good News' for anyone who hears it. God sent Jesus into this world that even in the darkest of times we can have hope. Between now and Easter we are going to explore inspiring Bible stories of people who found hope when life was hard.

Good News
For
The People

Thoughts for The Day (Weekly Digest)

Monday Jan 25: Dan Docwra

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?"

Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

Matthew 18: 21 – 22

Peter had an idea that forgiveness might be about counting and calculating but Jesus tells him not. The ultimate gift of forgiveness was given by Jesus on the cross, so by denying forgiveness to those who sin against us, are we turning our back on Jesus? "In Christian views, sin is an evil human act, which violates the rational nature of man as well as God's nature and his eternal law". (Wikipedia - debate that then!!)

However we regard "sin", it is wrong and if you are the victim of that sin, you may be in a position to grant forgiveness? How does that make you feel, superior and self-righteous? Isn't that also a sin?

For centuries, disunity and disagreement between Christians has often led to war, violence, scandal and confusion. Tolerance and patience are the examples set by Jesus and we must try to live as He did and work to cultivate a loving forgiveness.

We have come through recent years of unprecedented division in our land. First came the Scottish Independence Referendum and then Brexit. How many of us have forgiven those that we know voted differently from us? The hope for the future is that however we voted, we must come together to face the challenges that confront us all.

Prayer: Lord, please give us the strength to find forgiveness in our hearts when it is sought.

Action: Don't delay in granting forgiveness when it is asked for sincerely. It is far easier to grant forgiveness than to ask for it.

Tuesday Jan 26: Norman Smith

"Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

"At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' The servant's master took pity on him, cancelled the debt and let him go. Matthew 18: 23 – 27

How do you describe the Kingdom of Heaven to people who struggle to grasp reality on earth? Jesus relied on stories that communicated 'ideas' of what it is like. If you delve too deeply into parables you run the risk of losing the idea he is trying to get across.

Here it is that God responds to our needs with mercy which was a radical thought to people who considered God needed appeasing through sacrifice. As the servant fell on his knees the King decided to be gracious even though the servant has not demonstrated any ability to repay. If he had he would not have been in this situation! How good that God is willing to extend grace to us even when our past is full of failures. We really have an amazing God.

Prayer: Father you treat me better than I deserve. I can look back on my life to many situations where I have let you down but you never let me go. Thank you.

Action: Take note of 10 things to be thankful for today. Make sure you list God in there!

Wednesday Jan 27: Norman Smith

"But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded.

"His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.'

"But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

Matthew 18: 28 – 31

A few years ago something called 'Pass it forward' became all the rage. If someone did you a good turn you were to do someone else a good turn and so on and so on. A never ending chain of goodness because someone did you a good turn first; sounds amazing. Of course we know this is not the kind of world we live in because we can all be selfish, egotistical, grumpy, greedy, etc., etc. It was also not the world that Jesus lived in where every day he experienced people treating others in ways they would not wish to experience themselves.

Rather than talk about passing things forward, Jesus spoke of GRACE. He used examples like this parable to highlight that followers of God should be characterised by grace in their lives. Not how we received grace but how we exercised grace towards others, even when we had not received grace first. Jesus wasn't into paying it forward he wanted more. He

wanted his followers to exercise grace in every situation and to every person they met.

Prayer: Father the standard you want of me is something I cannot meet. I know that. Please do not let that stop me trying. Inspire me to do better in how I show grace to others.

Action: Try and be graceful in everything you do today.

Thursday Jan 28: Mary Macleod Rivett

“Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I cancelled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

“This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.” Matthew 18: 32 – 35

I always stumble when I come to this passage. It’s the point of the parable about forgiveness, and follows Jesus telling Peter he has to forgive people not seven, but seventy-seven (or seventy times seven, depending on translation) times. So why this? The master (God) had forgiven this servant a huge sum. Why did he take it back?

The master had forgiven his servant in a spirit of pity, generosity and love, establishing a new and different relationship with him. When the servant then didn’t forgive his fellow, he rejected this new relationship with his master. He treated forgiveness as a weakness and was only interested in getting as much money as possible. He chose to use the law to get that money from his fellow servant, and that meant that the law then had to apply to him as well. God forgives us first, from generous love, and if we don’t forgive each other, but choose instead to insist on our rights and justice, then we are choosing a life of law rather than a life in relationship with God.

Prayer: Father God, please show me where I am holding onto grudges and not forgiving people. I pray for your generous love and forgiveness to flow through me and help me to forgive these hurts.

Action: if God shows you somewhere you’ve hurt someone, take the first opportunity you can to apologise to them.

Friday Jan 29: Norman Smith

When Jesus had finished saying these things, he left Galilee and went into the region of Judea to the other side of the Jordan. Large crowds followed him, and he healed them there. Some Pharisees came to him to test

him. They asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?” “Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.” Why then,” they asked, “did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?” Jesus replied, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.” Matthew 19: 1 – 9

The demands of God’s law are impossible to meet for humans. Although Jesus is being challenged here about sexual ethics the principle of an unattainable law is there across the law as a whole. Why would God have a set of laws that were impossible to meet? Even if something was difficult but you knew by your own effort you could attain it, you would never stop trying. Never stop trying to do it on your own!

Jesus revealed a different approach in that we come to God via Grace.

Knowing we could never fulfil the law on our own the point was not to send us into despair but to drive us to God’s grace. God knowing we could not do it has made provision for us. Although only if we are willing to eat humble pie and approach God reliant on him. That’s the question then, are you willing to rely on God’s grace or do you prefer to keep trying to do it on your own?

Prayer: Father I find it hard for people to give me a gift without giving them something back. Help me to set aside my own pride and rely on you.

Action: Spend some time what it means to receive Grace and not to try and earn salvation.

Saturday Jan 30: David Moodie

The disciples said to him, “If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry.”

Jesus replied, “Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others—and there are those who choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it.”

Matthew 19: 10 – 12

These passages are confusing. In a modern context where there is a lot

lest angst about is someone properly married and 'eunuch' is an outdated term. It can be hard to put ourselves in the shoes and understand this conversation.

Eunuchs had a somewhat ambiguous status in the ancient world. In a society with strict gender roles, where having a family was one of life's most important goals, Eunuchs presented a grey area: they were not treated as men, but not considered women either. Many people's solution to this ambiguity was to shun them and shut them out. In the Jerusalem Temple, which was segregated into men's and women's areas, eunuchs weren't allowed into either. But there was a promise that one day this would change.

In Isaiah 56 it says *"To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose what pleases me and hold fast to my covenant—to them I will give within my temple and its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that will endure forever."* One day the people who were kept on the outside because they did not fit in, would one day find a home inside God's house.

This conversation can seem to us very technical and even a bit judgemental, but we should remember the bigger story. God's big picture is one of

redemption, it's a story where people of all kinds and backgrounds will be welcomed in to God's family. Our bodies, our gender, our relationship history, these things matter, but they are no barrier to God's love. Let us be grateful that in God's house there is space for all of us.

Prayer: Loving God, you know me and my whole story and you love me completely. Thank you for accepting me into your family. I promise that in everything I do, every choice and every relationship, I will do my best to share the love and acceptance you have shown me.

Action: Take a moment to be grateful for God's love and grace.

Sunday Jan 31: Sarah Smith

Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them.

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there. Matthew 19: 13 – 15

Have you ever had a conversation with a child? They ask a lot of questions, and want to learn many things. They are also very loving. A child has an immense ability to love and forgive people. We have a lot we

(Continued from page 6)

can learn from children about how to live. While we do learn and grow as we become adults, we need to also hold onto that curiosity, love, and forgiveness that children show us.

Prayer: Loving God, you remind us the

importance of being like a child in how we love others. Help us to continue to practice that way of living and not lose the curiosity of a child.
Amen

Action: Practice being curious

Our Church Values

Everything we do is rooted in **JESUS CHRIST**

EQUALITY is based on who you are and not what you have

EVERYONE is valued and everyone has gifts that can be offered to God

COMMUNITY brings with it respect across the generations and cultures

Cook-Inn' food bank is operating in our area. Up to once-weekly fresh and / or packaged food parcels, to be collected; or delivered to those of low mobility. Special diets catered for on request. They can be texted on; 07531 436 389, or messaged from the 'Cook-Inn SE Scotland' facebook page. They are a not-for-profit organisation, and receive no government funding. This allows them to give out fresh food as well as packaged or tinned. It also allows us to give food bags to someone as often as they need - weekly is the norm. If you know of someone who could use help please dial the number shown above.



**HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
DAY TRUST**

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) takes place on 27 January each year and is a time to remember the millions of people murdered during the Holocaust, under Nazi Persecution and in the genocides which followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. Holocaust Memorial Day is a time when we seek to learn the lessons of the past and recognise that genocide does not just take place on its own - it's a steady process which can begin if discrimination, racism and hatred are not checked and prevented. This year we invite everyone to light a candle and say a prayer as part of our remembering.



Due to current Government regulations all church activity is being held online. Keep checking the website for details.

PRAY IT FORWARD

We want everyone in the church family to be prayed for. Are you willing to spend some time at home praying for other people? If you are you will be given a list of people to pray for on a weekly basis. You may know them, you may not, they will all be part of our church family. Let Norman or one of the Ministry team know if you will be part of the prayer team.

Pray Together Thu 28th Jan 7pm, Zoom

Join with others online as we spend an hour praying together for those we know and the world we live in. You will need a pen, some paper and a candle.

For more info about anything in the Bulletin, snap the QR code or visit



grantonchurch.org.uk

If you have access to the internet, check www.grantonchurch.org.uk and click SUBSCRIBE to get Thought for the Day delivered every day.

If you don't have access to the internet and would like to receive this by post, or want to update your contact details please call Norman on 0131 551 2159

Minister:

Rev Norman Smith

norman@granton.org.uk
0131 551 2159

Session Clerk:

Dan Docwra

dan@granton.org.uk
0131 467 4239

Parish Assistants:

David Moodie

david@granton.org.uk
0785 663 0956

Sarah Smith

sarah@granton.org.uk

Treasurer:

Alan Summers

alan@granton.org.uk

Communications

Chas Macintosh

chas@granton.org.uk
0779 532 3889

Worship

Norman Smith

norman@granton.org.uk

Outreach

David Moodie

david@granton.org.uk

Nurture

Karen Docwra

karen@granton.org.uk

Social

Sandra Cumming

sandrac@granton.org.uk

Property

Neil MacDonald

neil@granton.org.uk

Hall Lets

Linda Young

linda@granton.org.uk

Pastoral

Gillian Macintosh

gillian@granton.org.uk

Safeguarding

Linda Young

linda@granton.org.uk

grantonchurch.org.uk

Climate & Re-Use Project

grantongoesgreener.org.uk