

20TH FEBRUARY 2022

FERINTOSH PARISH CHURCH

WORSHIP AT HOME



www.ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk

"I pray God that I may never find my will again. Oh, that Christ would subject my will to His, and trample it under His feet."

(Samuel Rutherford)

HYMN

O Christ, He is the fountain,
The deep, sweet well of life:
Its living streams I've tasted
Which save from grief and strife.
And to an ocean fulness,
His mercy doth expand;
His grace is all-sufficient
As by His wisdom planned.

O I am my Beloved's,
And my Beloved's mine;
He brings a poor vile sinner
Into His house of wine!
I stand upon His merit;
I know no other stand.
I'm hidden in His presence
And held by His own hand.

The Bride eyes not her garment,
But her dear Bridegroom's face;
I will not gaze at glory,
But on my King of grace:
Not at the crown He giveth,
But on His pierced hand;
The Lamb is all the glory,
And my eternal stand.

PRAYER

Gracious God and ever blessed Father, we thank you for the Scriptures, for a book of your words, your divinely inspired and authoritative words to help us find the way of salvation, to help us grow in grace, to navigate for us how we are to live our lives for your praise and glory, and we ask for your blessing now as we turn to the New Testament, we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen



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.
And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.*

SCRIPTURE READING LUKE 1: 39 - 45

39 Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah,
40 and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth.

41 And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

42 Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!

43 But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

44 For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

45 Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfilment of those things which were told her from the Lord."

SERMON

God is sovereign, and He works alone in the act of regeneration. That raises the issue of whether God uses means to bring a person from spiritual death to spiritual life. Does He use any created tools to regenerate sinners, or does He act directly?

What we are talking about is the immediacy of regeneration, and we know that regeneration is immediate. But we are not talking about immediate in the sense of time.

Often, when we say something happens immediately, we mean that it happened in the moment. For example, a child who immediately obeys her parents acts right after they finish giving her an order. That is not what we mean when we say regeneration is immediate. Instead, we mean that God acts directly on the heart and soul of a person. He does not, for example, regenerate us in the act of baptism, as some theological traditions teach. Water baptism is not a means that God works in to guarantee regeneration in all who are baptised, though it is a sign of regeneration that the Lord is pleased to give to His people to strengthen their faith.

To say that God acts immediately to regenerate people is not to say that the Lord never works through means. He ordinarily creates faith in us through the preaching of the gospel, for we cannot be saved unless we hear about our sin and the work of Christ (Rom. 10:14-17). But the actual change of heart from which faith comes is produced in us directly and immediately by God. Only He can bring dead sinners to life (Eph. 2:4-5).

Today's passage is typically used to support the immediacy of regeneration. When Mary came to Elizabeth, John the Baptist leaped in his mother's womb in response to the presence of Christ in Mary's womb (Luke 1:41). No gospel was preached to John at this point. He was not baptised or circumcised. Yet, he leaped in the womb because he recognised Jesus' presence.

Such joy is possible in Christ's presence only for those who have been given new life, so it is likely that John had that new spiritual life. And being in his mother's womb, it could have come only if God had acted on him directly. His faith came later, after his birth, when he was capable of belief, but his faith was evidence of prior regeneration; his faith was not itself regeneration. Similarly, if we have saving faith, then we know we have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

We may not be able to pinpoint the exact time of our regeneration, but one thing is for sure: a person is either regenerate or not. There is no partial regeneration.

Even if we may not feel particularly holy at times, if we have trusted in Christ, we have been regenerated and have been set apart to Him. May that knowledge encourage us to live changed lives, full of love for God and our neighbour, that are the fruit of a regenerate life.

HYMN

1 The sands of time are sinking,
the dawn of heaven breaks,
the summer morn I've sighed for,
the fair sweet morn awakes;
dark, dark hath been the midnight,
but dayspring is at hand,
and glory, glory dwelleth
in Emmanuel's land.

2 The King there in his beauty
without a veil is seen;
it were a well-spent journey,
though sev'n deaths lay between:
the Lamb with his fair army
doth on Mount Zion stand,
and glory, glory dwelleth
in Emmanuel's land.

3 O Christ, he is the fountain,
the deep sweet well of love!
The streams on earth I've tasted,
more deep I'll drink above:
there to an ocean fullness
his mercy doth expand,
and glory, glory dwelleth
in Emmanuel's land.

4 The bride eyes not her garment,
but her dear bridegroom's face;
I will not gaze at glory,
but on my King of grace;
not at the crown he gifteth,
but on his piercèd hand:
the Lamb is all the glory
of Emmanuel's land.

PRAYER

Gracious God and ever blessed Father, we thank you for the happiness that the Gospel brings into our very souls and pray now as we have read the Scriptures together that by the Holy Spirit you would bless us. We ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen.

BENEDICTION

And now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all this day and forevermore, Amen.

LADIES BIBLE STUDY

Wednesdays at 1.30pm in the Church Hall for approximately one hour. Why not join us then to study God's word and find out His plans for us.

CHRISTIAN AID ON-LINE SUPPORTERS' GATHERING

Christian Aid is holding an on-line supporters' gathering on Tuesday 22 February from 10am to 12noon. The focus will be Christian Aid's work in South Sudan. For more information and to register to participate, email: edinburgh@christian-aid.org

WORSHIP

Sunday morning worship takes place at 11.00am in the church. We have reduced social distancing to 1 metre within the church and as a result have been able to increase the number of seats that are available, though there is still an upper limit. We would love to be able to welcome you to the service, so to guarantee a seat, please book with the Session Clerk, Martin McLauchlan, preferably by 5pm on the Friday prior to the service.

To book, either visit the church website, and complete and submit the online booking form at: ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk/booking or email the Session Clerk at

SessionClerk@ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk and he will send you a link to the Booking Form for you to complete and submit. If you do not have access to the Internet, phone him on 01349 830303 and leave your name and phone number and he will get back to you as soon as he can to take your details.

The Sunday Zoom service is at 6.30pm. If you would like to join the Zoom-service, please contact the Session Clerk at SessionClerk@ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk

Please continue to take care and stay safe.

HIGHLAND FOODBANK

It has been suggested that the most urgent items required by the foodbank for now are tins of corned beef and jars of cooking sauce(but NOT pasta sauce). The volunteers would be so grateful for these items. Thank you for your amazing generosity.