



Old Parish and St Paul's Church of Scotland, Galashiels

Old Parish and St Paul's Church of Scotland, Galashiels, is a Charity registered in Scotland, No: SC010389

Newsletter ♦ October 2018

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Dates for your Diary

(details of some of these events in this Newsletter or Intimations)

Regular Events

- ♦ Mondays at 10.30 and Tuesdays at 10.00: **Bible Study** at Grantley
- ♦ Wednesdays at 10.00: **Badminton for Seniors**
- ♦ Thursdays at 12.30: **Lunch Club**
- ♦ Thursdays at 19.30: **Music Makers**
- ♦ Fridays from 18.00: **BBs**

Other Events

- ♦ Saturday 13th October at 09.00, Eastlands Cemetery, Galashiels: **Graveside Service of Remembrance**
- ♦ Wednesday 24th October at 14.30, Innerleithen Church: **Presbytery Autumn Conference on the Middle East**
- ♦ Saturday 3rd November: **National Day of Prayer**
- ♦ Sunday 25th November at 11.30, Old Parish & St Paul's: **Service of Holy Communion**
- ♦ Wednesday 28 November at 19.30, St John's Church: **Stuart Townend "Courage Tour" Concert**

Congratulations to:

Ken and Pin Teh on their Golden Wedding Anniversary on September 7th.

The Justice and Mercy of God

In various ways life contains paradoxes. Sometimes, two things that might at first seem to contradict each other are both in fact true.

One paradox concerns justice and mercy. At first sight these things might seem to be contradictory, but deep down we feel that they are both good and we relate strongly to each of them.

A deep sense that justice is a good thing

First, deeply ingrained within us is a sense that justice is a good thing. We feel it is right that an action that is morally wrong deserves to be followed by punishment, i.e., suffering of some sort, as a consequence of that action.

For example, often when we hear that someone has been convicted of a crime and has begun a prison sentence, we feel that the punishment is a fitting thing. We are pleased that the wrongdoer is being punished.

In fictional stories too we frequently find this theme. A storyline might begin, for example, with a person doing something evil, perhaps murdering someone. Then the police track down that criminal and bring them to justice. The audience of the story is encouraged to sympathise and side with the police in their quest. And at the end, when the wrongdoer is punished, there is a feeling of satisfaction that justice has been done. The story is designed to evoke these feelings in us, and they are ones that we relate to.

A deep sense that mercy is a good thing

Although we relate positively to the concept of justice, something else that is deeply ingrained within us is a sense that mercy is a good thing. We feel that there are times when it is good that a wrongdoer is not punished. In such cases, the just punishment is still deserved, but this is overruled, so to speak, by mercy.

For example, we will sometimes hear about someone who is deeply remorseful for something they have done wrong, and who then has mercy shown to them. When we hear about a situation like this, we often find ourselves feeling that it was good for mercy to be shown. We feel compassion for the remorseful wrongdoer, and although we still condemn what they did, we are glad that they have received mercy.

God administering justice and showing mercy

According to the Bible, the history of God's dealings with human beings has involved Him administering a lot of justice by punishing and also showing a lot of mercy. Given how we relate to the goodness of justice and mercy, it shouldn't be surprising that a good God would act in this way.

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The Bible teaches too that God will properly settle the matter of His justice and mercy towards us after we die. Importantly, it teaches that the 'default position' of people after death is to receive just punishment from God rather than mercy.

That people can more naturally expect punishment from God instead of mercy after death shouldn't seem strange:

Firstly, we have all done many things in our lives that are morally wrong, so no one can claim that they don't deserve punishment.

And secondly, mercy is exceptional in a way that justice is not. Being merciful to someone involves an overruling of the just punishment they deserve. But just punishment, by contrast, is something that naturally follows wrongdoing.

God's preference for mercy

Given that mercy, and not justice, is exceptional, we might expect God to have a preference for enacting just punishment over showing mercy. In fact, however, according to the Bible the opposite is true. Scripture teaches that His great love for people means that He actually prefers showing mercy to punishing.

In John 12:47, for example, Jesus says:

'I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.'

This shouldn't be taken literally to mean that Jesus will not judge the world at all. That would conflict with other parts of John's Gospel. It does mean, however, that saving the world, i.e., showing mercy to people, is at the heart of God's plan for human beings in a way that punishing is not. There are many other Bible passages that teach something similar.

For example, 1 Timothy 2:3-4 tells us:

'... God ... wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.'

And 2 Peter 3:9 says:

'The Lord ... is patient with you, not wishing that any perish, but that all come to repentance.'

The Bible, then, portrays God as having a preference for showing mercy over enacting just punishment.

We have a choice

According to the Christian faith, people all have a choice as to whether they experience God's mercy or justice.

Importantly, although God prefers to show mercy, the Bible nevertheless makes it clear that only a minority of people actually choose to receive His mercy.

For example, in Matthew 7:13-14 Jesus warns:

'Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. But narrow is the gate and constricted is the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.'

There is a need, then, for people to take action to ensure that they are among the minority who will gain eternal salvation.

This is done by accepting in faith Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour and Lord. When Christ died on the cross, He paid the price for all our wrongdoing, and then He confirmed that He had succeeded in this by rising from the dead. When someone believes this and accepts Christ as Saviour and Lord, it results in a relationship with Him and a whole new life.

Max Aplin

Annual Church Singles Competition

The competition was played at Longniddry Golf Club on Thursday 20th September, a day when the weather was kinder than originally forecast! Members and friends were invited courtesy of Peter Townsend, who is a member there. It was a fitting end to our season's golf!

- 🏆 First : Jim Tennant
- 🏆 Second Equal: Peter Townsend & Robert Lamont
- 🏆 Longest drive (14th hole): Robert Lamont
- 🏆 Nearest the pin (twice!): Peter Townsend
- 🏆 Fewest putts (tied): Jim Tennant & Peter Townsend
- 🏆 Wooden Spoon (shared): Steven Fox and Peter Sandison

Footnote: After our previous event at Melrose, the players agreed to make a donation to a local charity, and £105 was donated to the Doddie Weir Foundation.

TO DO LIST

1-Minute Bible Love Notes

1. Spend time with Jesus
Psalm 27:8
2. Let Him prioritize my day
Matthew 6:33
3. Pray instead of worrying
Philippians 4:6
4. Be honest about my sins
James 4:10
5. Think of others
Philippians 2:3-4
6. Wait patiently for God to act
Psalm 27:14
7. Be willing to do the hard stuff
Matthew 16:24
8. Read God's Word
Psalm 119:9-16
9. Do what it says
James 1:22
10. Let Christ lead me
Matthew 11:29

Adapted from BibleLoveNotes.com

Global Church Weekend 29th-30th September

Our sincere thanks to all who supported our Mission Dinner on the Saturday evening, and also thanks to those who gave through the Missionary Gift Envelopes on the Sunday.

The unaudited results to date are as follows:

To Tearfund (from the proceeds of the Dinner): £370

To the 13 missionary societies listed on the envelopes: £1,449

The Churches of St John's and St Paul's, through the generosity of those involved, will have contributed £1,819.00 - in all our largest total yet for the Global Church Weekend.

The sincere thanks of the Missionary Committee to St John's, who provided the desserts for the Dinner, to those in St Paul's responsible for providing soup, and to David Leckey and his wonderful band of helpers - both those who worked in the kitchen and those who waited on us at table.

Service of Remembrance to mark WW100

"A" Company of the 6th Battalion, the Royal Regiment of Scotland (6 SCOTS), are conducting what they are calling Operation LOWLAND REFLECT.

On 13th October they will be carrying out three graveside remembrance services at the graves of three soldiers from antecedent battalions that, over time, amalgamated and became what is 6 SCOTS today.

At 09.00 on Saturday 13th October they will conduct the first of these three services, at Eastlands Cemetery in Galashiels, at the graveside of Private J Tait who was killed in action on 26th January 1915.

They would like to kindly invite members of the congregation to attend the service, in which our Interim Moderator will be participating.

The intention is that it will be a short service, attended by members of "A" Company, 6 SCOTS, possibly along with a Colour Party, members of the local Legion branch, Council representatives and some members of the local community. The service is likely to consist of: a short introduction from the Company Commander; a little bit of history on Private Tait from a young soldier; a prayer and time of reflection; finishing with wreath-laying and "The Last Post".



Presbytery of Melrose and Peebles - Autumn Conference 2018 - The Middle East 24th October in Innerleithen Church

Programme

- ◆ 14.30: Arrival & Refreshments.
- ◆ 15.00: Welcome and Constitute Presbytery - Moderator Rev. Julie Rennick.
- ◆ 15.15: 'Between the Lines' - Rev. Grant Barclay visited the Middle East to find out what life was like. He found people who were affected by the establishment and growth of the modern State of Israel. Mainly for Palestinians and Palestinian citizens of Israel, the events of the past seventy years had brought about impoverishment, challenge and loss.
- ◆ 16.00: 'Why is the Church of Scotland so Involved?' - In his report to the General Assembly the Rev. Iain Cunningham took the opportunity not only to look back but also to take stock of the present and to check out a direction for the future. Why did the General Assembly instruct the World Mission and Church and Society Councils to bring a joint report to the General Assembly in 2017 on what might be appropriate to mark the centenary of the Balfour Declaration and what factors might make for peace and justice amongst the Israeli and Palestinian people?
- ◆ 16.45: Discussion Panel chaired by the Rev. Calum MacDougall - Rev. Grant Barclay, Rev. Iain Cunningham, Val Brown (Christian Aid) and Fiona Burnett (Presbytery World Mission).
- ◆ 17.30: Refreshments.
- ◆ 18.15 - 19.15: Service of Prayer for Peace and Justice in Israel and Palestine.



If you would like to attend the Conference, please contact Peter Sandison, your Presbytery Elder (01896 758634 / 07805 637709)

