



An Easter Reflection

Rev Robert Nicol

The Gospels tell us of several meetings Jesus had with his followers after his resurrection. Writing years later, the Apostle Paul listed those who saw Jesus, and then says that on one occasion Jesus met with over 500 people, most of whom were still alive at the time he was writing. Another meeting, which is described in one of my favourite passages in the Bible, is about two downcast disciples who were walking home from Jerusalem after the traumatic event of the crucifixion. A stranger joined them and asked them what they were discussing. They were surprised this man didn't seem to know what had been happening. As they explained about Jesus, they used one of the saddest phrases in the Bible – "We had hoped...". All the hopes they had put on Jesus and the new world they thought he was bringing in – it had all seemingly come to nothing. But then their hearts were lifted as the stranger patiently explained why it was necessary for the Messiah to die in this way.

When evening came and they were near their village, the two invited the stranger to stay with them. It was as the stranger broke bread that their eyes were opened and they recognised that he was in fact Jesus himself. They couldn't contain their excitement, and even though it was late, they hurried back to Jerusalem to tell the others – "We have seen the Lord". It is that transition from "We had hoped" to "We have seen" that I love. It was their encounter with Jesus which made all the difference.

And it still does, for all who come to know him as their Saviour and Lord. This is a time when many hopes and dreams are being put on hold, or even destroyed, by events beyond our control. We need to know that we have a God who can still turn our "We had hoped" into "Now I see".

A Greeting to the Communicants and Friends of the Tay and Lyon Churches

April 2020

Sandra Seath, our Outreach Co-ordinator, writes...

Hello, to all my dear Friends,

Probably like you, I do so much miss our friendly greetings and chats on Sundays amongst the pews - the cheery smiles, a bit of banter, conversations, laughs, feelings of togetherness as we listen to the bible readings and minister's talk, uplifting us and sending us out with encouragement to embrace the following week.

I have enjoyed linking into the worship broadcast through the Aberfeldy Church website and I know quite a number of folk in our congregations are doing the same. There is now a telephone link to this service for those without internet.

Here are some of my thoughts in a quiet moment - **Lockdown...** this has made me think about all the everyday things in our lives which we take for granted... **a hug for our friends and family** when we meet, popping into the coffee shop for a chat with a friend, a drive out into the countryside to enjoy the wonderful views and open spaces, the ringing of the doorbell and an unexpected caller, a reassuring hug to chase away anxieties and so much more... **but also lockdown has produced...** a huge outpouring of caring for others, for our friends and neighbours, support for cries of help from strangers... **an overwhelming wave of kindness** and reassurance for each other all around - such a good and caring selfless way to live one's life.

I pray, when we get through this and out the other side, that we appreciate and are thankful for all the positives in our lives and remember all these caring, selfless actions of people working in our hospitals, care homes and communities in these harrowing, anxious and worrying times.

Stay safe, stay well and please don't hesitate to lift the phone should you require any help or just a chat. You know I love to talk on 01887 830 316 (!!!) and so I'm looking forward to seeing you all once again soon.

Coronavirus and the Great Plague

Fran Gillespie

We are living in extraordinary times, but not unprecedented, as the media would have us believe. It's happened before, and the British people lived through it. When lockdown and self-isolation were announced I thought of the bubonic plague outbreak in London in 1664-5, known as the Great Plague. Documented by diarists Sam Pepys and John Evelyn who were on the spot and a generation later in a brilliant piece by Daniel Defoe, based on memories of his father and others. Everything they describe, we see now: shocking numbers of deaths, stopping spread of disease by confining victims & families to their homes or removing them to *pest houses* [isolation hospitals] where doctors struggled to save lives. Just as now merchants tried to make a quick buck by increasing basic commodity prices, and charlatans peddled fake medicines & useless cures. Outstanding examples of generosity and selflessness were noted, with people taking great risks to help others.

At least we know the present plague is caused by a virus; in the 17th century the bacterium, *Yersinia pestis* carried by flea-infested rodents was unknown as the cause. Then infection was considered to spread through the air, from people's breaths or by physical contact. People in the streets covered their mouths and spaced themselves out just as we do today. Shops provided bowls of vinegar to sterilise coins so these didn't pass directly from hand to hand - sadly useless under the circumstances. Fires burned in the streets and gunpowder was exploded inside houses to purify the air – one poor chap miscalculated the amount and blew off half his roof! Tragically, cats and dogs, thought to spread the plague, were exterminated, the very animals who could have reduced the rodent population. This was unknown then – it wasn't until 1894 that the cause of bubonic plague was discovered.

Just as today, the plague was international spreading from the East to Holland via traders and then on to England. As now, terrified citizens defied authorities and streamed out of London to the provinces. Many starved, but some met with acts of kindness & generosity. One town refused to allow refugees to enter for fear of contagion

and made them camp outside the boundary. For many weeks volunteers sent daily food supplies to the camp: Feldy-Roo, 17th century style!

In New York mass burials with coffins stacked in long trenches recall the plague burials described by Defoe, when bodies were tipped into pits. We see empty streets in major cities worldwide. "Lord!", exclaimed Sam Pepys, "what a sad time it is to see no boats upon the river: and grass grows all up and down Whitehall."

Vitally, we share the same deep faith in God as our ancestors as they bravely struggled to cope with a massive pandemic. Despite the tragic number of deaths then, life soon returned to normal. That year, 1665, saw the last bubonic plague outbreak ever to devastate the UK - let's hope that 2020 will see the last of Covid-19.

LOCAL SERVICES REMINDER

FELDY-ROO

This is a free meal delivery service for the vulnerable and over 70s living within the government guidelines and isolating. Please register on **01887 820418** or call Sandra (01887 830316) for more information or for help to register.

KENMORE BAKERY

All the usual goodies plus eggs, milk, vegetables and meat. The van delivers on TUESDAYS and FRIDAYS to Lawers Hotel carpark at 10:00am, to Fearnan Village Hall carpark at 10:30am, to Molteno Hall, Fortingall carpark at 11:00am and Keltneyburn Monument at 11:30am.

Orders 01887 830556

LAWERS HOTEL

Pizza Friday—deliveries to Kenmore at 6pm and Fearnan at 7pm. There is also sausage and mash, mince and tatties, chicken curry.

Orders 01567 820436

TAYMOUTH COURTYARD can provide a home delivery service and a drive-up collection service. **Orders 01887 830756**

BREADALBANE BAKERY is happy to deliver fresh bread, cakes, vegetables and dry goods.

Orders 01887 820481