

**St. Margaret's Community Church of
Scotland**

Dunfermline

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It is Father's Day this Sunday – a special day when we remember the special place our fathers played in our lives [or, should have played, because not all fathers sadly were good fathers!] Our fathers, for many of us have long gone but their memory lingers on and on Sunday, I will remember to give thanks for my dad even though it is 30 years since he died.

Jesus challenged the legalistic and dull religion of his day when he referred to God as "Abba" – "Father" or more intimately "Daddy". He dragged religion out of the doldrums and filled it with warm, personal love. Gone was the sterile, severe image of God that had been passed on and held on to by the teachers of his time!

This Father's Day, then, let us remember how Jesus called us to be with God – as children who are beloved. Let that warm and encourage us.

But, allow me to take this a step further. Our passage for study this Sunday [on Zoom and Facebook] will be Acts chapter 5 verses 12-16. What is special about this passage? It tells of the early followers of Jesus and their belief in the supernatural gracious and loving power of God – they truly connected with God.

You see, to them, God was not some kind of austere deity. He was intimately involved in this world and deeply cared about people. Not only did he care, he helped the disciples to connect with that care and power. Let me quote fully

something I used earlier during the week:

"In a seminary missions class, Herbert Jackson told how, as a new missionary, he was assigned a car that would not start without a push. After pondering his problem, he devised a plan. He went to the school near his home, got permission to take some children out of class, and had them push his car off. As he made his rounds, he would either park on a hill or leave the engine running. He used this ingenious procedure for two years.

Ill health forced the Jackson family to leave, and a new missionary came to that station. When Jackson proudly began to explain his arrangement for getting the car started, the new man began looking under the hood. Before the explanation was complete, the new missionary interrupted, "Why, Dr. Jackson, I believe the only trouble is this loose cable." He gave the cable a twist, stepped into the car, pushed the switch, and to Jackson's astonishment, the engine roared to life. For two years needless trouble had become routine. The power was there all the time. Only a loose connection kept Jackson from putting that power to work.

J.B. Phillips paraphrases Ephesians 1:19-20, "How tremendous is the power available to us who believe in God." When we make firm our connection with God, his life and power flow through us - Ernest B. Beevers."

Might we use this time to reflect on the power that is available for us and as we live through and come out of this lockdown, might we confidently move forward in the power – supernatural power – that we have in Jesus.

Iain

This week, as usual, we will on Sunday Morning have a Facebook thought for the Day – about 15 or so minutes long.

However, on Sunday morning we are also going to experiment and have a Zoom service. Download Zoom – that is all you have to do. If you want to join the Service then email me and let me know. I will post a link to your email account and all you need to do is click on to it any time after 10.50 and I will let you in – this can be done on computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone. Let's have a bash and see what we can make of this new way of doing things.

I in particular liked this summary of good advice given to Christians on how they might live:

“Don't live in regret.

Never let fear dictate your goals.

In the spiritual realm, when you want something you've never had, be ready to do something you've never done.

Trust in the power of God, not the power of man.

Make sure your feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

Take care of your character and God will take care of your reputation.

Guard your mind and you will guard your life.

Link up with God's people.

Forgive others so you will be forgiven.

You can only stand firm and tall in the fight of faith if you stand low in humility and prayer.

Never set goals that don't include souls.”

“Barrie tells us how, in the little house at Thrums, they used to tiptoe to and fro when his mother was upon her knees, awed by the knowledge that she was praying for them. And here and there in the New Testament, we blunder in on Christ and find Him on His knees; and, once at least, ere we can escape, cannot but overhear Him pleading our names. “Neither pray I for these alone,” that is, for Peter and John and the rest, “but for those who will believe through them”—that is, for you and me. Hush! The Lord Christ is praying for you! And what is it He asks for us? That we be given such a spirit of unity and brotherliness and Christlikeness that people, coming upon us, will look at us, and look again, and then from us to Jesus Christ, seeking the explanation of us there – A. J. Gossip”

“If you want answers to your prayers, and you're not certain what you're praying for is God's will, do what others in your situation have done. Pray conditionally. Pray that God will answer you according to his will. Ask yourself these questions:

- Will what I ask bring glory to God?
- Will it be beneficial to other believers as well as to me?
- Will my request bring shame to the name of Christ?
- Will it bring short-term pleasure but long-term sorrow?
- Will what I ask help people or hinder them?
- Will it help me to grow spiritually, to be a better witness?
- Will this be the kind of request Jesus would make?
- Will I be sorry at the judgment seat of Christ that I made this request?

- Woodrow Kroll”
