

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

Dunfermline

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How can I be sure? Sure of what? Sure that God loves me and that my life is safe with Him! How can I be sure?

That is a huge question that goes right to the heart of the Christian Gospel. Let's try and tease it out and see where this takes us. My parents never once told me that they loved me – how then did I know that they did in fact love me? For me, as I reflect on it, it was the care, kindness, concern and support that they gave to me from the day I was born until they died. That was the clear evidence.

How then do I know that God loves me?

First of all **revelation**. God speaks to us through the Bible and he consistently tells us that we are created in His image and even though we have rebelled against Him, He still loves us.

Second, **the life and teaching of Jesus**. Everything that Jesus did – the way He treated people – and taught, was a clear indication of a person who has a profound and passionate love and care for people.

Third, **the ultimate action of Jesus**. Jesus laid down His life for us. On the Cross, He faced the wrath and judgement of God that we deserved. He paid the price for all of our sin and rebellion.

Fourth, **the invitation of Jesus**. He encourages us to come to Him. He invites us to place our faith in Him and put our lives under His eternal and infinite protection.

His love is personal and individual. He recognises both our weaknesses and our strengths. He loves us not for what we will become but for who we are, even in all of our lostness. He calls out to us in Jesus and asks us to come to Him in an action of faith and resolve to become His Child.

Notice, He does not ask us to become His servants – we become His children. Paul speaks about “adoption” – where a person becomes part of a family from which they were once estranged. This is “adoption” forever – as all adoption is. We are given a new name and a new identity. We are now in His family forever and people of the Kingdom of God.

We also know that He loves us because He wants the very best for us – what good parent wouldn't? What, though, is meant by this? God is good, righteous, kind, compassionate, forgiving, loving and morally perfect. God wants the best for us in terms of a transformed character – this is the strongest evidence of His love. He does not simply want to forgive and save us, He wants to enable us to become new people. To this extent He patiently teaches us, but he also “disciplines” us according to the New Testament – this does not mean any kind of harsh violence – He disciplines us and often has hard and strict things to tell us in the process – why? Because He loves us so much He wants to restore us to the perfect image we see in Jesus.

Can we be sure? Of course we can. God, comprehensively and emphatically sets out before us what strong, purposeful and uncompromising love is – the very best that there is or ever will be.

Iain

Intimations

Church services will begin again on the 30th of August at 11am. There is a separate sheet with this to set out what needs to happen and I would ask that you read this carefully.

Booking in will begin on Monday morning and every Monday morning thereafter. At the moment we are very limited to the number we can have in church – 40-45. If the social distancing changes to 1 metre then this will substantially increase the possible attendance.

For those who feel they cannot come, there will be a Zoom Service running alongside the service **and** the Service will be livestreamed on Facebook [a livestreamed service is retained in Facebook and can be watched at a later time.

We are hoping that the café and some sort of normality will begin to return through the Autumn but a great deal will depend on the outcome to the present situation and the timing of a vaccine.

About ten years ago, a young and very successful executive named Josh was travelling down a Chicago neighbourhood street. He was going a bit too fast in his sleek, black, 12 cylinder Jaguar XKE, which was only two months old.

He was watching for kids darting out from between parked cars and slowed down when he thought he saw something. As his car passed, no child darted out, but a brick sailed out and WHUMP! It smashed into the Jag's shiny black side door! SCREECH!!!! Brakes slammed! Gears ground into

reverse, and tires madly spun the Jaguar back to the spot from where the brick had been thrown.

Josh jumped out of the car, grabbed the kid and pushed him up against a parked car. He shouted at the kid, "What was that all about and who are you? Just what the heck are you doing?!" Building up a head of steam, he went on. "That's my new Jag, that brick you threw is gonna cost you a lot of money. Why did you throw it?"

"Please, mister, please...I'm sorry! I didn't know what else to do!" pleaded the youngster. "I threw the brick because no one else would stop!"

Tears were dripping down the boy's chin as he pointed around the parked car. "It's my brother, mister," he said. "He rolled off the curb and fell out of his wheelchair and I can't lift him up." Sobbing, the boy asked the executive, "Would you please help me get him back into his wheelchair? He's hurt and he's too heavy for me"

Moved beyond words, the young executive tried desperately to swallow the rapidly swelling lump in his throat. Straining, he lifted the young man back into the wheelchair and took out his handkerchief and wiped the scrapes and cuts, checking to see that everything was going to be okay. He then watched the younger brother push him down the sidewalk toward their home.

It was a long walk back to the sleek, black, shining, 12 cylinder Jaguar XKE - a long and slow walk. Josh never did fix the side door of his Jaguar. He kept the dent to remind him not to go through life so fast that someone has to throw a brick at him to get his attention.

PS: Some bricks are softer than others