

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

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We've all got our cross to bear!" I don't know how often in my life I have heard people say this to me, often with respect to a very difficult set of circumstances or a very difficult person in their lives. Have you said it? What did you mean by it?

We have been studying Luke's Gospel since just before Christmas – there have been readings every day and sermons every week based on Luke. In Luke chapter 14 and verse 27, Jesus is recorded as saying this:

"Whoever does not bear their own cross and come and follow me cannot be my disciple."

That is very clear, or is it? What did Jesus mean by it and what would the crowd to whom He was speaking have understood by what He was saying? When Jesus is speaking here, He is not speaking about life's trials in general – "we have all got our crosses to bear" – nor would the crowd listening to Him have understood it the way we speak about it today!

Probably all of the people in the crowd would have seen someone bearing a cross on the way to their execution and would have known the brutality of this form of death – the metaphor to them would have been associated with death. Jesus' words would have been a reminder to them of what they had seen – perhaps many times – that awful picture in their minds of a man carrying his cross beam on his way to public execution and humiliation.

We would not imagine Jesus was referring to life's general, even desperate trials, if He said: "If you are going to be my disciple you will need to submit to a lethal injection, or if you will be my disciple you will need to die first by hanging!"

Jesus is saying – this time with graphic visual imagery – that a disciple is someone who is prepared to follow him and "die" to his or her own plans and submit instead their lives to God's purposes by following Jesus: Whatever these purposes are and whatever it may cost us.

Paul later wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:15 – "Christ died that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for their sake and was raised."

C.S. Lewis once remarked in the closing paragraph of his classic "Mere Christianity" – "nothing in you that has not died can ever be raised from the dead."

We are moving steadily towards Easter and the question is whether or not we have really grasped the significance of what Jesus did and what He is calling us to do! Sure, in love, He died for our sins to make us right with God and surely, He rose again to guarantee eternal life. But, in doing all of this He calls out to people to come and follow Him.

"Die to yourself, your ambitions, your aims, objectives and goals and come and follow me." That is clearly what Jesus is asking of every one of His followers!" What does that mean for you – right now, today?

[I am grateful to Dr Sinclair Ferguson for the substance of what is written here.]

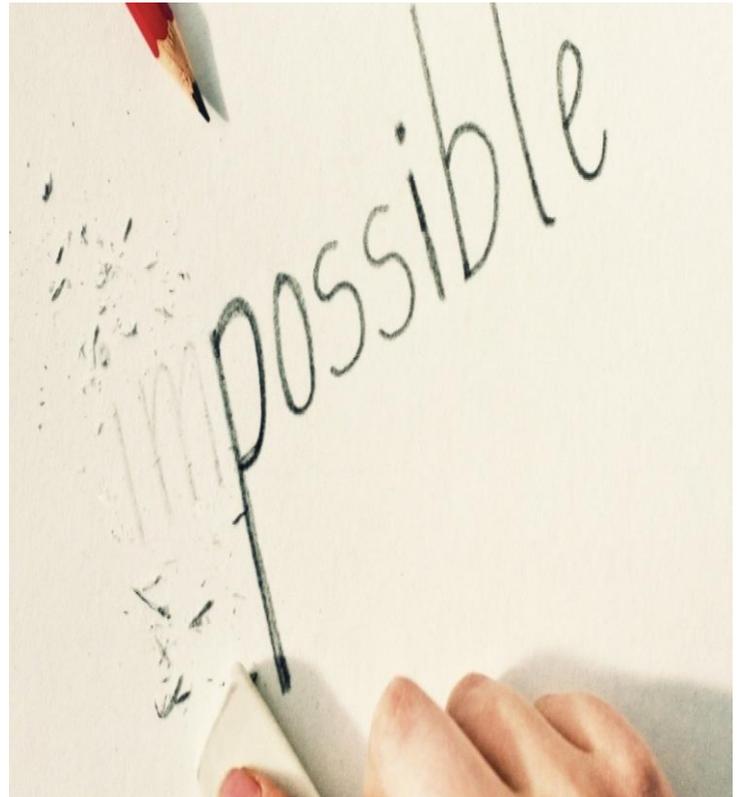
Iain

Intimations

Services will be at the normal times on Sunday – Facebook will go on at 9am, Zoom at 9.45.

Zoom Service on Wednesday at 6.45 beginning at 7.00pm. We are continuing this Season of Lent with reflections by Con Campbell on the life of Peter with the filming shot in situ – this is number 4 in the series.

At Easter I am planning to send round an Easter Card from the Church to at least 500 homes and would love to put a knitted cross in each envelope – pattern can be got from Irene on 01383731947 ireneandjim@gmail.com or June on 01383724992 junemaco@gmail.com.



HYMN VERSES

Our chosen verse for this week comes from one of our members who again wishes to be anonymous – perhaps we should rename St. Margaret’s “The Church of the Anonymous Saints!!

Our verse comes from the hymn “The Christ is alive” which is number 416 and verse 3 in the Church Hymnary:

“In every insult, rift, and war

Where colour, scorn, or wealth divide,

Christ suffers still, yet loves the more,

And lives, where even hope has died!”

“There are times when I find faith in this, sometimes, evil world, so difficult and this Easter hymn helps me to regain perspective.”

[If you have a verse from a hymn you would like to offer – even anonymously – just drop me a note or an email.]

“The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why. – Mark Twain

“There is only one way to avoid criticism: do nothing, say nothing, and be nothing. –Aristotle

“When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would not have a single bit of talent left and could say, I used everything you gave me. –Erma Bombeck

“We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light. –Plato