

## Glenkens Worship Material for Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020

### Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures;

he leads me beside still waters;

he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths

for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil.

For your rod and your staff they comfort me.

You prepare a table for me in the presence of my enemies;

You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life;

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

### Prayer

Dear God, Saviour and Shepherd of Your people, we come to praise You, to encourage one another, and to seek Your will for our lives, for our church, and for our world.

Open our eyes to the traffic between heaven and earth, and to the wonder of Your call to live in the light, through Him who is the light of the world, even Jesus Christ.

Lord, we thank You for the wonder of sight.

For the beauty of the world we see each day,

for the ordered loveliness of worlds we see in nature, through video and good report,

for the majesty of the heavens and the marvels within the tiniest object, we give You thanks.

For people who have lit up our lives by their goodness and service,

for people who have led Your church in wise and even wonderful ways,

for people of courage and vision and loving perseverance, we praise Your name.

We thank You above all for Jesus, our Brother who walked in the light and gave light to others,

our Saviour who has shown us Your light and let it illuminate our lives,

our Friend who has brought heaven and earth together,

the One who prays for us continually, who listens to our concerns, who shares our hopes and our fears.

We thank You for every good person, for every bit of service that makes our journey cleaner and easier and happier, and for everything that bring light and joy into our lives.

Blessing and honour be to the God who is above all things yet present in the world as it changes from day to day;

to the God who is shrouded in mystery yet wonderfully brought into view by Jesus;

to the God whose Spirit brings light and love to our daily lives.

May we know his peace in our hearts at this time. Amen.

## Hymn

Loving Shepherd of thy sheep,  
Keep me, Lord, in safety keep;  
Nothing can thy power withstand;  
None can pluck me from thy hand.

Loving shepherd, thou didst give  
Thine own life that I might live;  
May I love thee day by day,  
Gladly thy sweet will obey.

Loving Shepherd, ever near,  
Teach me still thy voice to hear;  
Suffer not my feet to stray  
From the straight and narrow way.

Where thou leadest may I go,  
Walking in thy steps below;  
Then, before thy Father's throne,  
Jesus, claim me for thine own.

## Luke 15: 1-10

One day when many tax collectors and other outcasts came to listen to Jesus, <sup>2</sup>the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law started grumbling, "This man welcomes outcasts and even eats with them!" <sup>3</sup>So Jesus told them this parable:

<sup>4</sup>"Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them—what do you do? You leave the other ninety-nine sheep in the pasture and go looking for the one that got lost until you find it. <sup>5</sup>When you find it, you are so happy that you put it on your shoulders <sup>6</sup>and carry it back home. Then you call your friends and neighbours together and say to them, 'I am so happy I found my lost sheep. Let us celebrate!' <sup>7</sup>In the same way, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine respectable people who do not need to repent.

<sup>8</sup>"Or suppose a woman who has ten silver coins loses one of them—what does she do? She lights a lamp, sweeps her house, and looks carefully everywhere until she finds it. <sup>9</sup>When she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbours together, and says to them, 'I am so happy I found the coin I lost. Let us celebrate!' <sup>10</sup>In the same way, I tell you, the angels of God rejoice over one sinner who repents."

### Lost Sheep and Coins

Shepherds in Judea at the time of Jesus had a hard and dangerous task. Pasture was scarce and the sheep had to roam widely to get enough to eat. The central plateau wasn't that wide and on the east side it plunged down in wild cliffs towards the desert and the River Jordan.

The sheep could easily wander into dangerous places and wild animals were always a threat. Many of the flocks were communal flocks, belonging not to individuals but to villages. There would be two or three shepherds in charge and the shepherd was personally responsible for the sheep under his care. If a sheep was lost the shepherd had at least to bring home the fleece to show how it had died. Shepherds were expert at tracking and could follow the straying sheep's footprints for miles across the hills. They were quite used to risking their lives for their animals.

And so when in Luke 15 Jesus told the parable of the lost sheep and a shepherd still out on the mountain searching for a lost sheep one could imagine the whole village anxiously on the watch. One can imagine the joy and relief on all sides when in the half-light of dusk they saw their shepherd friend striding home with the lost sheep across his shoulders. There would be a deep satisfaction that the lost sheep had not perished but had been restored to the flock. It would be a good excuse for a celebration.

And so, says Jesus, it is the same with God. God and the angels in heaven are as glad when a lost sinner is found as a shepherd is when a strayed sheep is brought home. God loves the folk who never stray away; but in his heart there is a special joy when a lost one comes home, and he is always seeking to reach such ones and bring them home.

He also told the parable of the lost coin. It wouldn't have been difficult to lose a coin in a Palestinian peasant's home. They were very dark, with just one small circular window, and the floor was beaten earth covered with dried reeds. Once a coin slipped in among the reeds it would be hard to find unless one lit a lamp and went over every inch of floor very carefully. You might think one silver coin was hardly worth making a fuss about. But there are two reasons why the woman in the story would have persevered long and hard trying to find it. For a start it was worth a little more than a whole day's wages and could have been very necessary to buy food for the family. But there is another reason which brings even more meaning to the parable. The parable says the woman had ten silver coins. In Palestine the mark of a married woman was a head-dress made of ten silver coins linked together by a silver chain. It was almost the equivalent of her wedding ring. If one of those coins had gone missing you can imagine how glaringly obvious the gap in the evenly-spaced row of coins on her head-dress would have been. It would upset her deeply and she wouldn't be able to rest until it had been restored to where it belonged.

Jesus is saying that is how God feels about anyone who has wandered away from him and lost their way in life. He feels the gap caused by them not being where they can enjoy his light and his love. And what joy it brings him when they turn and come back to him. If you have wandered from God and feel a bit lost in the wilderness, perhaps now in these anxious and uncertain times is the time to hear his homeward call. And if you are already safe in the family of God's people I call upon you to feel with God his compassion for those who are missing from his family and to do all that you can to help them find their way home.

## Hymn

Thy hand, O God, has guided  
Thy flock, from age to age:  
The wondrous tale is written,  
Full clear, on every page;  
Our fathers owned thy goodness,  
And we their deeds record;  
And both of this bear witness,  
*One Church, One Faith, one Lord.*

Thy heralds brought glad tidings  
To greatest, as to least;  
They bade men rise, and hasten  
To share the great King's feast;  
And this was all their teaching,  
In every deed and word,  
To all alike proclaiming,  
*One Church, One Faith, One Lord.*

Through many a day of darkness,  
Through many a scene of strife,  
The faithful few fought bravely  
To guard the nation's life.  
Their Gospel of redemption,  
Sin pardoned, man restored,  
Was all in this enfolded,  
*One Church, One Faith, One Lord.*

Thy mercy will not fail us,  
Nor leave thy work undone;  
With thy right hand to help us,  
The victory shall be won;  
And then, by men and angels,  
Thy name shall be adored,  
And this shall be their anthem:  
*One Church, One Faith, One Lord.*

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The Church of Scotland has joined with other religious groups across the country to sign a letter commending the Call for a National Day of Prayer in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Taking place on **Sunday 22 March**, people of faith are being encouraged to light a candle and place it in their window at 7pm.\*

The letter asks that we "join in prayerful solidarity with this witness", describing the candle as "a visible symbol of the light of life, Jesus Christ, the source of hope in this life."

They write:

“At such a time as this, when so many are fearful and there is great uncertainty, we are reminded of our dependence on our loving Heavenly Father and the future that he holds.”

### **Pray for leaders**

“We have the great privilege and freedom to be able to call upon God, wherever we are, individually and corporately, for healing in our nation. We would pray for all in leadership at this time, making decisions about the containment of the COVID-19 virus, for those working

in health and social care, and especially for the most vulnerable, whether elderly or those with underlying health conditions.

“There are already stories being told of wonderful acts of kindness across neighbourhoods. Alongside your prayers, take the opportunity to telephone or email someone who is isolated, buy some additional food for your local foodbank, offer to deliver shopping for an elderly neighbour. We may not be able to touch physically, but we can make connections in so many other ways.

“At 7pm this Sunday, light a candle in the windows of your homes as a visible symbol of the light of life, Jesus Christ, our source and hope in prayer.

### **Mothering Sunday**

“We note that this call to prayer and action comes on Mothering Sunday: a time of thankfulness, remembering especially mothers that have served us, often in very costly ways. It is also a very mixed day for many.

"For some the remembrance is painful, and for others Mothering Sunday is a reminder of disappointment or loss. In many ways, this period under the shadow of the coronavirus will be prompting similarly diverse reactions and so it seems especially appropriate that the call to prayer is made this Sunday.

**“Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you” 1 Peter 5:7.**

The following prayer can be used when lighting the candle:

*For all that is good in life, thank you,  
For the love of family and friends, thank you,  
For the kindness of good neighbour and Samaritan stranger, thank you.*

*May those who are vulnerable, hungry or homeless, experience support,  
May those who are sick, know healing,  
May those who are anxious or bereaved, sense comfort.*

*Bless and guide political leaders and decision-makers, with wisdom,  
Bless and guide health workers and key workers, with strength and well-being, Bless and guide each one of us, as we adapt to a new way of living.*

*And may the light shining from our windows,  
across road and wynd, glen and ben, kyle and isle,  
be reflected in our hearts and hands and hopes.*

*Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.*

\* Please take all necessary fire precautions when using a lit candle. Ensure you remain with the lit candle at all times, and do not leave it to burn if you leave the room. Ensure there are no fabrics or materials such as curtains near the candle.