

The birds of the air



Janice Scott

Mark 4:26-34

Jesus generally taught using parables. People remember a good story, and many of Jesus' stories made reference to familiar passages from the Old Testament that his listeners would know well.

Both of the stories in today's passage from Mark are about God's kingdom, and both contain Old Testament references. In the story about scattering the seed, the sickle is a reference to the book of Joel (3:13) and, in the story about the mustard seed, the reference to "birds of the air" is from Ezekiel (31:6).

Of course this is about far more than simply telling a memorable and entertaining story. Each of Jesus' parables held a challenge, a new

twist, if you like, on a familiar tale. These are clever, multi-layered stories that spoke to Jesus' listeners – and still speak to us today – in different ways each time they are heard or read.

Perhaps the challenge for us is to understand that the growth of God's kingdom is not under our control. This growth depends on soil and the weather, both of which are under God's control. So no matter what we do, God's kingdom will continue to grow. It may have very small beginnings, but it will grow to such an extent that, like the birds of the air, we and all of God's creation will find shelter there.

The joy of vocation

Something for everyone,
John Witcombe

Petertide refers to the Sunday nearest to St Peter's Day, which this year falls on Friday 29 June, and to the period around it. In the Anglican tradition it is the traditional time when new priests are ordained.

The word "vocation" comes from the Latin word for "calling". The Christian life begins, as it did for those who first met Jesus by the Sea of Galilee, when we respond to the call of Jesus to follow. Faith leads to following, and following

leads to coming to know Jesus and being sent by him into ministry. So vocation is neither a standalone thing nor a possession – it is not something you "have", like a certificate on the shelf. It is born out of relationships – with Jesus, and also with the Church. And it needs to be lived out as an expression of those relationships. Everyone has a part to play, and that part is recognised and blessed by the Church in a kaleidoscope of moving patterns and colours that enrich one another and allow light to shine through the whole Church and into the world.

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Rest and relaxation – a series for summer

A spiritual spa,
Heather Smith

If you have ever visited a spa, you will know that the point is to luxuriate in hot water, enjoy a relaxing massage or other treatment and perhaps indulge in a gentle swim, all punctuated by magazine reading by the pool and healthy food

and drink. The aim is to take us out of the mundane to a higher place free from our usual stress, as the name of one particular spa – Nirvana – implies.

The suggestion is that we reach maximum physical relaxation and this takes us somewhere beyond the mere physical. It might – if you ditch the magazine and let your mind stray to thoughts of God. A relaxed body certainly makes it easier to focus, but perhaps the long days of summer are a good opportunity to create a spiritual spa. Spend a little time with the Bible and see if God shows you something new; enjoy some meditation and relaxing prayer.

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Church of Scotland: Parish of Orphir & Stenness

Interim Moderator: Rev June Freeth 721449

Locum Minister: Rev Martin Prentice 851139

Session Clerk: Nicol 811242

Kirk Information

There is a loop system. Adjust hearing aids to benefit.

A warm invitation is extended to everyone to meet in the hall, after the service, for a cup of tea or coffee.

Intimations

Tuesday 7:30pm: Choir

Thursday 10-12: Community Café

Urgently needed - Bakers and servers: Could you bake for the cafe or spare a couple of hours on a Thursday morning to serve and chat to folk? It would be gratefully appreciated. The same few folk always have to bake and serve. Help would be fantastic. Liz

Café Transport: If you, or anyone you know would like to come to the Community Café on a Thursday morning but don't have transport, please get in touch with Anne Groundwater on 811394 to arrange a lift.

Kirk website: Would you like to publicise a group or event on the website? Chat to Susan: email: susan.coulter@yahoo.co.uk or call 811447.

Readings 2 Cor. 5: 6-10 & 14-17 Mark 4: 26-34

Hymns **132** Immortal, invisible, God only wise
 354 O Love how deep how broad, how high
 192 All my hope on God is founded
 553 Just as I am, without one plea (*T. Saffron Walden*)
 476 Mine eyes have seen the glory

Prayers of Intercession

L: Lord, hear our prayer:

All: Transform them by your grace, Lord.

Doxology

May the God of peace go with us as we travel from this place:

May the love of Jesus keep us firm in hope and full of grace.