

Throwing out the rubbish

Heather Smith *reflects on*
Philippians 3:4-14

Losing something, depending on what it is, can range from a vague irritant to a deeply devastating experience. A ballpoint pen can easily be replaced, but a laptop or phone may contain vital information and its loss can seriously disrupt life. Losing a significant item like a wedding ring may cause a different kind of distress and the loss of a loved one is life-changing.

What kind of experience of Christ must Paul have had, that made him able to say in his letter to the Philippians: "I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ"? It would be an unusual person who could

say that some major loss they had suffered was "rubbish" compared to the experience of God in their lives. Perhaps it helps to think of the deep grounding Paul had as a result of his relationship with Christ. Without it he could not have fulfilled his vocation to spread the Gospel.

We too need to be grounded in God, and that firm foundation is there for us, whether we recognise it or not. If we let the knowledge of it grow within us we may find that loss, although destabilising, does not destroy us. If we put Christ first we will begin to see our lives, whatever they may bring, with God's perspective. ☺



Gracious God, may the knowledge of your presence grow within us, grounding us until we stand firm in your love. Amen.

National Pet Month

Uncomplicated love

by Gillian Cooper

People sometimes speak of their pets offering them "unconditional love". That is not quite accurate, since their relationship with us is based on getting the care and protection they need. Their love is better described as

"uncomplicated". We love our pets, and they love us, in a way that is easy and straightforward. I arrive home, and Poppy does a little dance of joy as she attempts to lick my face. It makes no difference what mood I am in, or what time of day it is, or how long I have been away. There is no condemnation for having gone, no criticism for being late. She is simply glad I am back.

There is joy in heaven, Jesus says, over the lost sheep who came home, the lost coin that was found. God's love and welcome is both uncomplicated and unconditional, and like that of our pets, it warms our hearts. ☺

Finding God on the smallholding

by Jeni Parsons

When I read that the Spirit of God brooded over the face of the waters at creation I've thought in the past that it was a still, serene image. Now that I've hatched two goslings in the incubator who think I'm their mother and want "brooding", I've begun to realise how different it really

is. The goslings climb up my jumper, cuddle into my neck, wriggle to get comfortable, make tiny noises to me and want soft replies, poo on my jumper and then get restless when they want to explore the world.

The Spirit must have experienced such intimacy in the brooding over creation which is both a past and a present thing. God still "broods" over us in that very positive way and now I've more reason to let God into my humanity, my continual need for brooding by the divine, because goslings have shown me deeper things. ☺

“ I lift up my eyes to the hills – from where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. Psalm 121:1-2

Church of Scotland: Orphir and Stenness Parish

www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/ORPHIRANDSTENNESS

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. Switch off phones. They cause interference with the organ. Thank you.

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

Intimations

Today 2:30 pm: Our congregation is responsible for taking the short service at St Peter's Home. Come along and swell the singing. All welcome.

Tuesday 7-8 pm: Fellowship Lent Study - Justice. Now what? All welcome.

Tuesday 8 pm: Choir

Thursday 10am – 12noon: Community Café in the kirk hall

Sunday 14th April 11.15 am: There will be a communion service.

Tuesday 16th April 7-8pm Fellowship, final evening before the summer break. Bring and Share supper. All welcome.

Thursday 18th April 7.30 pm: There will be a session meeting in the Kirk hall.

Readings: Psalm 126 John 12 v 1 to 8

Hymns: 201 Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness
115 Love is the touch of intangible joy
619 and 620 Spirit of the living God
622 We sing a love
461 verses 1 - 4 How sweet the name of Jesus sounds

Doxology

May God's blessing surround you each day,
As you trust Him and walk in his way,
May his presence within guard and keep you from sin,
Go in peace, go in joy, go in love.