

Worship At Home

28th February 2021

Who or what inspires you?

A would be opera singer told her young audience on this date in 2014 as she spoke at a school assembly "find the people who inspire you and grapple them to you with hooks of steel". In other words - Find people who inspire you and stick with them and engage them in conversation so that you can learn from them and become the best version of yourself.

Let's Pray together

Come if you are hungry, because God longs to feed you.

Come if you are searching, because God longs to find you.

Come if you are weary, because God longs to give you rest.

Come to the God of salvation, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Today we bring you our worship, as we stand in the grace of God

found in Jesus Christ our Lord. You are our inspiration, come and inspire us. **Amen.**

Reading: Mark 8:34-38 [Read from 'The Message Bible'](#). [Read from the NIV](#)

The Carrying of the Cross by Raymond Sides

There was only one way to the cross for Jesus as He travelled through time,
And it is the same road for us to travel, this righteous road of yours and mine.

The road was not easy for Jesus as He made His way to an old rugged cross,
And the road will not be easy for us, but in the end we'll not have suffered any loss.

Jesus' way became burdensome as He travelled the path leading to the place called cavalry,
And our ways will at times be burdensome as we travel this path that sets us free.

Jesus carried His cross as He suffered much pain for you and me,
So we must carry our own crosses daily and suffer for Him as the need be.

The devil thought that the cross of Jesus would be His end, making Him history,
But he now knows that the crosses we Christians carry, leads us to real victory.

Jesus carried His cross of burdens by Himself, for one cross is all that a person can bear,
So we must carry our own crosses, for a cross with another we cannot share.

The cross of Jesus was of great cost to Him, the cost of shame, suffering, and pain,
But as we carry our crosses while suffering little pain, we, in the end, have heaven to gain.

As we gather in the name of Jesus, consider what you bring with you from the past week:
What has gone well, what have you done well? What is unfinished and needs finishing? What hurts and bruises did/do you bear, what sadness hides within, what has made you angry or frustrated?

Let us Pray

We bring to you Lord all that is good in our lives and all that stands in the way of our worship.
We know that God's grace is sufficient to forgive and heal every pain.

Lord, do not be far away; I want to thank you for all that is going well But also come quickly to my aid, comfort me and supply me with Your grace sufficient for my needs.

You do not despise the afflicted, or hide your face from us. Your grace is sufficient for everyone's need. You Lord, are my hero - you came to my rescue as you went to the cross, taking all my pain and sorrow.
 Forgive me and heal the pain I carry so that I can, again look to the good, strive for the good and pay attention to the advice and the help and the love you offer me.
 Amen.

Listen or sing or read the words of this hymn - MP769 Who is on the Lord's side?

1 Who is on the Lord's side? Who will serve the King?
 Who will be His helpers, other lives to bring?
 Who will leave the world's side? Who will face the foe?
 Who is on the Lord's side? Who for Him will go?
 By Thy call of mercy, by Thy grace divine,
 We are on the Lord's side—Saviour, we are Thine!

2 Not for weight of glory, nor for crown and palm,
 Enter we the army, raise the warrior psalm;
 But for love that claimeth lives for whom He died:
 He whom Jesus saveth marches on His side.
 By Thy love constraining, by Thy grace divine,
 We are on the Lord's side—Saviour, we are Thine!

3 Fierce may be the conflict, strong may be the foe,
 But the King's own army none can overthrow;
 'Round His standard ranging, vict'ry is secure,
 For His truth unchanging makes the triumph sure.
 Joyfully enlisting, by Thy grace divine,
 We are on the Lord's side—Saviour, we are Thine!



CCLI 620398

<https://youtu.be/hzqzoEuLXUo>

Reflection: Carrying your cross?

This week, I have been reading Nancy Beasley's book titled 'The Underground Railroad in DeKalb County, Illinois in which she shares details of the work of local congregations in a heroic effort to change the world.

The Underground Railroad was a network of secret routes and safe houses used by the enslaved African-Americans in the early to mid-19th century in an effort to escape slavery. While in some parts of the USA 'abolition (of slavery)' was a political rallying cry, in Illinois it primarily found its roots in the faiths of (mostly) farmers who first cleared and then settled this land. Men and women, of the Methodist Church, Presbyterian Churches and Unitarian Churches built their homes with hidden rooms, underground passageways, constructed haystacks with hollow cores and wagons with false bottoms explicitly to provide temporary shelter for those who had risked everything for a chance at freedom.

They risked their lives and their livelihoods to do the right thing in getting those regarded as runaway slaves a few miles closer to Chicago and Lake Michigan and safe passage to Canada. And it seems to me these people heard Jesus' call to 'pick up their cross' to follow Jesus as a call resulting in ways of living which were substantially different than if they had never heard Jesus' invitation echoing in their own hearts.

It is a marvellous story. One that stirs my imagination. These men and women risked so much so long ago and through simple actions of love made important changes to the lives of those they helped. These are concrete examples of what Jesus calls us to, in our own histories and in our own area. Those should give us courage as we seek to do the same.

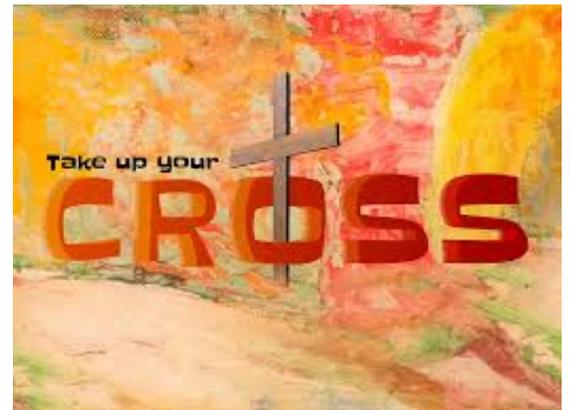
The heroes I am reading about were unaware, or unwilling to be aware, of the certain truth that while their faith called them to this important work, they were only able to do so in the forced absence of those Native Americans who had inhabited this land not so very long before. Indeed, countless other human beings had lost their lives or driven west so that the heroes in the underground railroad in the USA could then lay claim to, clear and cultivate the very land these communities called home.

Heroes, yes. But flawed ones. Imperfect ones. Like all of us, faithful in some ways and on some days and not in others. We may show flashes of faithful heroism, but at the same time we are bound up by sin.

We may lift our crosses to our shoulders now but all the while our very ability to do so is based on the truth that we are only able to do so at the expense of others.

This certain truth could lead us to respond in a number of ways, of course. For we might just give up because we find it too hard or taking up too much time. We might think that our lived witness falls so far short, that we want to leave it to others we consider to be more suited to the task. Or we might realise that it is never too late to lift the cross to our shoulders and take the first step or the next step in being and doing as Jesus did. We might hear this as a call to follow not just once, but more as it is spoken in Mark 8:34-38 where Jesus calls those within hearing to take up our cross not once and for all, but daily.

Just as those who sheltered runaway slaves in haystacks and hidden rooms and who helped ensure their safe passage to freedom, our own history of picking up our cross and following after Jesus is spotty. But to let that stop us, from attempting to do it differently today is to give in to the brokenness. And that is giving in to powers of death and destruction and evil. And that would be a repudiation of all that Jesus was and did and all that he calls us to be and do as well.



We will never be perfect. But that must not, cannot, stop us from doing it at all as we attempt to follow the One who picked up his cross and suffered and died for us all. So while I recognize their flaws, still I am lifted up by the heroic witness from the past, who risked everything to help others gain the same freedom they took for granted, because they saw the face of God in their faces. Today. I am wondering now what it means for us to do the same. In Mark 8.34-38 Jesus talks about the need for his followers to deny themselves, to make sacrifices. He made it clear to his followers not to expect an easy life, but he said their sacrifices would be worth it.

If richer countries 'sacrifice' some of their vaccine supplies, that means other poorer countries can vaccinate their populations and it makes the world safer. Similarly, when we, as Christians, learn to deny ourselves, step outside our comfort zones and take risks to show people God's love, we find ourselves being used by God in ways we could never imagine. Are there any sacrifices you could make this week to show God's love to someone?

Take a look at <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/rowanpatterson> where a Christian couple have launched a campaign to 'twin' vaccines. It suggests that two doses of the vaccine can cost between £4 and £30 and, by donating an amount to UNICEF, as you receive your vaccine, could enable those across the world to also receive a vaccine. Consider donating if you are able - in thanksgiving as or when you have received your vaccines.

Let's pray

Lord, we give thanks for people of faith, who follow your calling and remain true to you. We pray for all who must leave their homeland and travel to new places far away. We pray for the leaders of nations, for presidents, first ministers and prime ministers, kings and queens, local government politicians and tribal chiefs. We pray for those who inspire us with stories of the past and those who suffer through sickness or loneliness. **Faithful God**, as a cautious route out of lockdown is planned, may we hold on to the hope it offers but not run ahead of the realities. We pray for the work of ensure fair access to vaccine for all, and we ask that poverty would not create vaccine inequality. May we find new and creative ways to reconnect with friends, family members and our church community. May we live the story that we tell - of your suffering love for us, of your creative power, and of the gospel promise of a world made new. May we be ready to play a part in the healing and restoration of our relationships and of your world, and may we be ready to heal the hurt that separation has brought. Faithful God, as days lengthen and signs of spring appear, we thank you that you have placed us in community, and we remember today all the people who fill our lives with hope. We remember in silence all we know who are struggling today: the sick and hospitalised, those who are waiting for treatment, and...

May your love surround them. Soon you will call us to follow the footsteps to the Cross: help us to make ourselves ready to respond.

Your power is seen when love is poured out in the broken body of your Son and by your Spirit we are made whole. So, in your healing and your hope we stand this day. **Amen**

Listen or sing or read the words of this hymn - CH4 544 When I Needed A Neighbour

1 When I Needed A Neighbour
Were You There, Were You There?
When I Needed A Neighbour
Were You There?
And The Creed And The Colour
And The Name Won't Matter
Were You There?

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2 I Was Hungry And Thirsty
Were You There, Were You There?
I Was Hungry And Thirsty
Were You There?
And The Creed And The Colour
And The Name Won't Matter
Were You There?

3 I Was Cold, I Was Naked
Were You There, Were You There?
I Was Cold, I Was Naked
Were You There?
And The Creed And The Colour
And The Name Won't Matter
Were You There?

4 When I Needed A Shelter
Were You There, Were You There?
When I Needed A Shelter
Were You There?
And The Creed And The Colour
And The Name Won't Matter
Were You There?

4 When I Needed A Healer
Were You There, Were You There?
When I Needed A Healer
Were You There?
And The Creed And The Colour
And The Name Won't Matter
Were You There?

5 Wherever You Travel
I'll Be There, I'll Be There.
Wherever You Travel
I'll Be There.
And The Creed And The Colour
And The Name Won't Matter
I'll Be There.

<https://youtu.be/B7aZLdgRh-k>

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all evermore. **Amen.**

Thank you to those who have taken the time to contact me. Take care out there this week. May the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you this day and each day.

Rev. Susan Thorburn, sthorburn@churchofscotland.org.uk

If you choose to email me, please can you tell me who you are and where you live. Thank you. 4