

January 2021 Newsletter



PASTOR'S PEN *by Graeme Shanks*

Lessons in the Jesus school of discipleship

Lesson 1: It is by losing ourselves that we find ourselves!
(Mark 8:31-9:1)

Some things in life seem so counter-intuitive. One icy evening this week I tried steering our car up the driveway. Seeing the slight glimmer of ice up ahead I tried accelerating ever so slightly in order to clear it. I only succeeded in creating a wheel spin to the amusement of the passers by. I tried again. Same result. To my great relief I got in on the third attempt. The solution wasn't found in going faster. The solution, in a way that didn't make immediate sense to me, was to drive slower. Some things seem so counter-intuitive.

The same is true if you follow Jesus. Peter found this out the hard way. The pivot point in Mark's gospel is when the penny finally drops in Peter's mind as to who Jesus really is. 'Who do you say I am?' asks Jesus. 'You are the Christ!' Cue streamers and jackpot noises! Our boy's got it! But has he? He might have the identity right. However, when it comes to grasping exactly what it means for Jesus to be the Christ, well Peter's got that all wrong! Rejected by the religious elite? Crucified publicly by Romans soldiers? Surely not! That's not in Peter's Messiah playbook. Power and prestige is! But Jesus lovingly explains just how counter-intuitive being his follower is.



We can all too easily hang Peter out to dry at this point. Surely he should have known better?

But as I found myself sitting on at the beginning of yet another year surveying the months and planning the days ahead it struck me that too often Peter's mindset is my mindset! How many of my ambitions for the year ahead concern the advancement of my own affairs? How often my mind is on the things of man rather than on God?

Here then is the counter-intuitive call of Christ.
It is precisely by losing ourselves that we will find ourselves.

“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves
and take up their cross and follow me.
For whoever wants to save their life will lose it,
but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it.”
(Mk 8:34-35)

Here then is the cross-shaped call of the King. Die to your own agenda. Say no to your own desires. The impulses. The dreams and ambitions. The rights and demands. Instead, take them captive as you seek first his Kingdom. That is cross shaped living. We live in a world where the opposite tune is being played. The way to life is to affirm yourself says our culture. The call of Jesus seems so counter-intuitive. Yet the promise of Christ is that this is exactly how we will know life.

So what might 'denying yourself' look like for you this coming year? What things could you do but you won't do this year for the sake of following Christ? Do our friends and family sense in us a cross-shaped life patterned on Jesus? I always love how the early disciples at Antioch were first called Christians. Quite literally people labelled them 'little Christ's'. They clearly saw something of the cruciform pattern of Jesus in the lives of these early believers. What a wonderful tribute to their witness in that city.

Some things seem so counter-intuitive. They don't immediately make sense to us. Yet let's remember that the one who spoke these words also rose from the grave. Perhaps his claim on us is justified by the fact that death has no claim on him!

If you see Bruntsfield as your church, we encourage you to fill in a Personal Details Form so we can keep in contact with you. The form is available at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/XD6XRXX>.

OUR SERVICES IN JANUARY

Services in January will depend on what is possible withing Government restrictions, but we plan to continue to broadcast from the church at 11am each Sunday via YouTube and at 6pm over Zoom. In the short term, only those involved in the service will be at the church. We'll keep you informed about future plans as the situation develops.

On Sunday mornings, we're returning to our studies in Ephesians, while the evenings will cover the early chapters of Isaiah.

Morning Service

	Speaker	Leader	Subject
3 January	Graeme Shanks	Graeme Shanks	Free Rein
10 January	Graeme Shanks	Jonathan Thomson	Ephesians 4:1-6
17 January	Alistair Chalmers	Luca Sueri	Ephesians 4:7-16
24 January	Andy Paterson	Graeme Shanks	Ephesians 4:17-32
31 January	Graeme Shanks	Archie W-I	Ephesians 5:1-14

Evening Service

	Speaker	Leader	Subject
3 January	Zoom prayer meeting		
10 January	Archie W-I	Graeme Shanks	Isaiah 1:1-31
17 January	Graeme Shanks	TBC	Isaiah 2:1-4:6
24 January	Luca Sueri	Alistair Chalmers	Isaiah 5:1-30
31 January	Vision Evening and Church AGM		

The morning service is on YouTube each week at 11am and is also available to watch later. It's at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxO6-UQrKeVb-MkDTIXmfuA>.

Our evening service is at 6pm on Zoom. The meeting code is 547-778-568. The passcode is 208705. You can also join by phoning 0131 460 1196.

OTHER ACTIVITIES IN JANUARY

Weekly Prayer

During January, we'll continue to meet together on Zoom to pray each Monday and Thursday evening. The meeting code is 547-778-568. The passcode is 208705. You can also join by phoning 0131 460 1196. These prayer times have been a real encouragement to those who join them, and a great opportunity to pray and share fellowship together. Please consider joining by Zoom or phone if you haven't yet.

Small Groups

Small groups will meet through Zoom in the weeks of 11 and 25 January.

Kids Church

Kids Church meets via Zoom at 10am each Sunday. The code is 950-221-425. We will keep you informed on whether it is possible to meet at the church.

The Embassy

The Embassy also meets via Zoom at 10am in Sunday mornings. The leaders will provide more information, including any weeks it can meet at the church.

Basics Bank and Care Van

Basics Bank is from 10am to 1pm each Friday, and our turn on Care Van is at 9pm on Wednesday 20 January.

coffee@bruntsfield

coffee@bruntsfield meets via Zoom on Friday 15 January. Fuller details will be provided nearer the time. The Zoom code is 869 4615 8933, and you can also dial in on 0131 460 1196 with the same code. The passcode is Coffee.

Grove 92

Grove 92 women's Bible study, meets over Zoom on Thursdays. For more information, please contact Dani - Dani.neira@bruntsfield.org.uk.

Vision Evening and AGM

Our Vision Evening and Church AGM is on Sunday 31 January at 6pm via Zoom. It will include feedback on the recent church consultation. Our accounts and yearly reports will be distributed in advance.

MISSION NEWS

Please pray for **Thomas and Addie Loewen** as they prepare to go to Senegal, where Thomas will work with a team designing a plan for an expansion of a pediatric hospital in Mali and Addie plans to volunteer with the Beer-Sheba Project in their farming and discipleship programmes.

Michael is still looking for doors to open to enable him to return to the Far East.

Richard & Elaine Leakey continue to build unity in the YWAM team in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, and ask for prayers for their own leadership development as they are now seen as parent figures by many staff. There's a photo from Naomi and Nathanael's wedding below, and they'd appreciate prayer for Rebekah, who's planning to attend a Discipleship Training School during her gap year and then perhaps study nursing, and for Emma who finishes compulsory schooling in the summer and is looking to go into an apprenticeship.



HEART OF THE MATTER SCHEDULE

- 3 January: Heartbeats of 2020 Part 2
- 10 January: Dr John Lennox, Professor of Mathematics / Author
- 17 January: J I Packer, Theologian and Author
- 24 January: Rev. Louise Purdon, Bonnyrigg Parish Church
- 31 January: Joanne Lunn, Musician

Black Diamond 107.8 FM: Sunday 9 am. repeat 8 am. following week. Crystal 107.4 FM: Sunday 11 am. /Midnight and Tuesday 11 am. Alive FM 107.3 FM: Sunday 10 am. G4G Online: Wednesday& Saturday 9am. Heartsong Live online: Various times. Most stations are available through radio or online.

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