

Weekly Newsletter: 19th September 2022

Reflection: Conversing with God's Word

By Hannu Sorsamo

Last Sunday in our church in Tampere the sermon was on the second chapter of John's Gospel in which Jesus rises (or rages?) against the merchants in the Temple. Turning over the Forex tables and chasing away the livestock dealers, he shouts:

"Stop turning my Father's house into a market!" (John 2:16b)

As so often, the question of how to apply the passage in my own life continued to bother me after the sermon. This time, it also made me realise something about how I process Scripture. Let me try to share this with you through the example of my last few days with John 2:16.

My very first reaction to the passage in John 2 is that we cannot draw direct parallels. We are under the New Covenant. We no longer have the Temple, so I cannot go wrong by selling doves in its forecourts. We have our churches, of course, but there are good theological reasons for not equating the church with the Temple. So I guess the Christmas sale is ok after all. What about the metaphorical meaning? In the same passage, Jesus identifies his body with the Temple. Paul later writes about *our* bodies being temples, and the Christian congregation being a temple. Should we then not turn ourselves or our communities into markets? What's that supposed to mean?

For me, there is rarely a direct universal application, a rule to follow. Instead, the effect of Scripture is a slow process of changing attitudes, values and thought patterns. How should I approach life and its decisions so that I would not prioritise *whatever the market represents* over *whatever the Temple represents*?

The way I process Scripture, I now observe, relies on the assumption that if I let the text speak to me, and if I meditate on it, it will slowly alter my inner life in a way that will have a bearing on how I act. This doesn't happen through a list of rules but through, what I hope, is a "renewal of my mind", as referred to by Apostle Paul in Romans 12:2. (Writing this makes me acutely aware of how much further I wish I were in that process.)

On Tuesday, I discussed the text with my colleagues. How could the Cleansing of the Temple affect how we operate as a mission organisation?

For one thing, the discussion made me realise how, when I'm invited to speak in a church service, I have become very careful that I do not turn it into a fund-raising or recruitment event. Nor do I ever ask the church to designate the offering to our organisation. (Doing so would not be unusual in our context.) There is of course nothing "unclean" or even profane about raising funds for a worthy cause. There are many suitable times for fund-raising. I've simply come to believe that our time of worship isn't one of them.

I did not suddenly decide on this approach after I had read John 2. But I find it agreeing with the ethos of the text. I believe this text and others have affected my thinking over the years. And then, slowly, my thoughts have begun to influence my actions.

Finally, my understanding will always be less than perfect, to state the obvious. And the world around us is in constant change. I therefore need to remain open to being continually challenged about the way I apply God's Word. I need to remain willing to allow my behaviour patterns to change as my understanding – by God's grace – grows and adapts.

I have not written the above to boast and say, "See how godly my actions are!" Far from it. I have simply shared a personal experience of how I often converse with God's Word. Perhaps it can encourage you who, like myself, feel that the process of spiritual growth is painfully slow.

Peter Swinson

By Ernie and Norma Shippin

We learned on Sunday of the passing into glory of our friend and brother in Christ, Peter Swinson. We especially remember, and uphold in prayer, Heather, as well as Joanna, Linnea and Nigel and their families, to whom Peter was devoted. Peter and Heather had just celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary and their shining example of how to love one another for the long haul has been an inspiration to us all. While we are deeply saddened to hear of Peter's death, we are grateful to God that he has been released from the conditions which were increasingly frustrating and restricting him.

Peter has been a faithful member of the Holyrood fellowship for over 50 years and was an elder for more than 40. We recall with gratitude Peter's unbounded enthusiasm for the life and work of the church. He made a huge contribution, as a hard-working and much-loved elder, as a computer and AV expert, as health and safety adviser (the manual he produced when we moved into our current building is superb) and as a founder member and supporter of the music group. Peter loved playing his clarinet and there was much joy and laughter when he was around - and let's not forget the annual BBQ hosted at Abbey Road where his special talents at croquet came into their own (though Phil was always determined to win!)

Special mention should be made of the enormous amount of work Peter put into facilitating the purchase of 121 Montgomery Street and its subsequent renovation and his steadfast and unwavering support during a time of transition.

Peter and Heather have provided wonderful hospitality to so many in the fellowship over the years - we remember fondly Peter's gift of conversation, his wit, his ability as a story teller. Peter was a highly intelligent

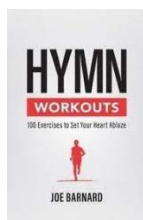


man, who had a successful professional career as an architect and subsequently as a health and safety adviser, and who had a keen interest in many subjects, not least the history of our church building. He was a man of strong opinions, often passionately expressed, yet always courteous and respectful - a true gentleman with a smile that could light up the room and a twinkle in his eye. Peter had an unwavering gospel focus - he loved his Lord and lived his life to serve Him. He will be sorely missed in HEC.

Men's Discipleship – this Thursday

Joe is running a Men's Discipleship Group on Thursday mornings at 10.30am in the church. Tea and coffee will be provided and Joe will be using hymns as the basis of the discussion.

Hymn Workouts: 100 Exercises to Set Your Heart Ablaze



Joe's new book is released this Friday! Pre order your copy from amazon [here](#) and feel free to give it an honest review on amazon.

If you have difficulty getting a copy or would like someone else to order one for you, please contact Liz (Liz@holyroodevangelical.org)

Equip – Pastoral Focus

Our next Equip Session will be Sunday 2nd October at 6pm and we're looking forward to having Lynn Miller along to speak to us. Lynn is Director of Counselling at St Mungo's Church, Balerno and her session will be informative and interactive.

Book Group – this Saturday

A group of women from HEC and other congregations get together monthly to enjoy a discussion about the Christian books. Each June we pick the books that we will read over coming session and then get together on the last Saturday of the month to share thoughts and insights and exchange views on the book we have read.



For the past 2 years most of our meetings have been on Zoom of course but our last few meetings have been in person and it has been great to be able to do that again.

The new session of the Book Group starts on 24 September and our first meeting will have a slightly different format to our usual one. We are planning that each member of the group will share their recommendations for a good read so that we can broaden our reading horizons.

If you are interested in finding out more please speak to Anncris Roberts.

Scottish Women's Bible Convention – Saturday 1st October

The Scottish Women's Bible Convention is 'a day of faithful Bible teaching by women for women with the Lord Jesus as our focus.' It is taking place in Charlotte Chapel on Saturday 1st October from 10am until 3pm.

Rachel Sloan will be speaking from Ephesians and Romans on the theme on adopted as daughters. More details are available [here](#) and get your tickets [here](#).



Unite For Education - Saturday 8th October

UNITE FOR EDUCATION
SATURDAY 8TH OCTOBER
10am - 5pm
EDINBURGH - SCOTLAND
52 GORGIE ROAD,
EDINBURGH, EH11 2NB

LIGHT LUNCH PROVIDED

TOUCHING ON VARIOUS TOPICS INCLUDING:

- UNDERSTANDING THE LAW
- THE CONCERNS OF TODAY
- EQUIPPING THE CHURCH
- INFLUENCING STATE SCHOOLS
- EQUIPPING HOME EDUCATORS
- UNDERSTANDING THE POLITICS
- SETTING UP NEW SCHOOLS
- AND MUCH MORE

FOR ALL INVOLVED AND INTERESTED IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM
HEAR FROM THOSE IN EDUCATION. LAW, POLITICS AND LEADERSHIP
For more details email - uniteforeducation7@gmail.com

Church Calendar

For your prayers and info –

- Wednesday: Prayer Meeting on Zoom at 7pm
- Thursday: Men's Discipleship Group at 10.30am in the church
- Saturday: Book Group at 3.30pm
- Sunday:
 - Worship Service at 10.30am (and live streamed). Joe Barnard preaching. Please contact Liz by 12 noon on Thursday if you would like a socially distant seat.
 - Home Groups



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