

## Weekly Newsletter: 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2024

### Reflection: Sorrowful yet rejoicing

By Steve Midgley (taken from <https://bcuk.org/resource/sorrowful-yet-rejoicing/>)

Knowing when to speak words of comfort can be tricky. Knowing just how soon to offer words of hope and reminders of the sovereign plans of God is not always easy to get right.

Sometimes we step too quickly into the offer of comfort. Sometimes, when speaking with others, our own discomfort can nudge us to want to speak of comfort and hope as soon as we can. The pain we see in others may seem so deep, so overwhelming, that we simply cannot bear it. And so, it is for our own sakes and in order to remove our own discomfort, that we try to make the pain go away. Of course, that does not always land well. Sometimes, our words of comfort communicate to others not kindness but an unwillingness to bear with their pain. Faced with the emotional chaos of deep suffering and sorrow, something in us may want to restore a sense of order. We want things back in control. And so, like a sticking plaster over a gaping wound, trite reminders of gospel truth serve to mask the awfulness of sorrow and pain without ever properly engaging with it.

But those gospel truths are true and there are good reasons to want to share them. In sudden and awful tragedy, God *is* sovereign. In bereavement and death, Jesus *is* indeed the resurrection and the life. Whatever threat we face, God *will* bring us home. Such truths seem relevant. Indeed, they *are* relevant. Do we really have to delay saying them? Surely there is a rightness about speaking them as soon as we can.

So, what should we do? Perhaps the difficulty here is not so much an issue of speed, but of simplicity. For when we view our emotional responses in simplistic ways, we will think in terms of either/or. Either you are happy or you are sad. Either you despair or you have hope. Either you mourn or you rejoice. But in reality our emotions are complicated. We feel many things simultaneously.

### Complex emotions

Recalling the experience of watching his son play sport, Wayne Grudem notes that “I can simultaneously feel sad that his team lost, happy that he played well, proud that he was a good sport, thankful to God for giving me a son and giving me the joy of watching him grow up, joyful because of the song of praise that has been echoing in my mind all afternoon, and anxious because we are going to be late for dinner!”<sup>1</sup> Even more striking is the complex experience of emotion described by Paul in 2 Corinthians when he states that he is “sorrowful, yet always rejoicing” (2 Cor 6:10). It sounds paradoxical. We tend to think that it needs to be one or the other. Either you are filled with sorrow or you are filled with joy. It can’t be both. Which can also lead us to imagine that the path out of sorrow is linear. In the face of sorrow what a person needs

is to be reminded of gospel truth in order that this truth might bring back to mind spiritual realities that will restore their joy such that sorrow will be taken away.

Paul sees it differently. Things are more complex. Not sorrow or rejoicing, but sorrow *and* rejoicing. Not sorrow replaced by rejoicing, but sorrow combined with rejoicing. It was his own experience in relation to the church. “I face daily”, he wrote, “the pressure of my concern for all the churches.” (1 Cor 11:28). Yet the same churches for whom he felt such anxiety were simultaneously the source of his great joy – “I have spoken to you with great frankness; I take great pride in you. I am greatly encouraged; in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds!” (2 Cor 7:4).

Jesus also recognises the complexity of our present experience. “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33). Both peace and trouble – at the very same time. Not one removing the other, but one co-existing with the other.

### **Nuanced responses**

This has profound implications for our care of one another. It should radically shape the way we speak into the experience of trouble and struggle. How? By encouraging us to make room for a paradoxical mix of emotions.

Years ago, a friend sent me a message in the face of a recent bereavement. His message conveyed the petition he was making on my behalf: “I pray”, he wrote, “that you would be honest in your grief and joyful in your Saviour.” It was such a helpful message because it made space for both sadness and joy, distress and comfort, the reality of loss and the presence of my Saviour. Emotions of sadness alongside emotions of joy. Not one chasing out the other, but each standing with the other.

The joy a Christian knows in Christ doesn’t eclipse sorrow. It may even, in some sense, give a believer the courage to engage with sorrow and sadness even more deeply and more honestly than they could otherwise.

So, let’s find ways to speak gospel truth into sorrow quickly. Not in order to ease our own discomfort, nor implying that sorrow must instantaneously cease, but with the awareness that sorrow and joy can mingle. With a conviction that Jesus was right: in this world we will have trouble and yet into our trouble he also brings peace.

<sup>1</sup> Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology*. IVP, 2007, p447.

## **Roofing Work**

We are expecting the work on the roof to start on **1<sup>st</sup> May**. While we do not expect any disruption to our services or meetings during the week, there will be scaffolding going up. Please pray for the work to go smoothly and for all those involved in the project.

## **Annual General Meeting**

Save the date! The elders have agreed that the AGM will take place on **Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May** at 7pm followed by a time of prayer.

## Holyrood Youth – First Fridays



Our youth are getting together on **Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> May** for a treasure hunt (created by Alex MacDonald) around the areas near the church.

Meet at the church at 7pm. Please let Andy know if you're coming or need any further details ([andyandlizscott@gmail.com](mailto:andyandlizscott@gmail.com))

## Mission Prayer Meeting

Our next prayer meeting with our missionaries will be on **Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> May** at 9am on Zoom. Come along to hear updates and pray for the work. Zoom codes will be sent out nearer the time and please contact [Liz@holyroodevangelical.org](mailto:Liz@holyroodevangelical.org) for codes if you don't already receive them.

## Annual Giving – Gift Aid

If you would like a summary of your annual giving under the gift aid scheme, please drop Nick an email ([nickandjean@gmail.com](mailto:nickandjean@gmail.com)). Thank you!

## Prayer Meetings

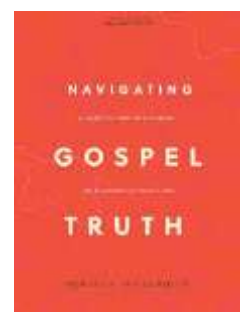
Our prayer meetings are now **in person every week** at 7pm with a Zoom option available. Refreshment will be served from 6.45pm for those in the building and Zoom codes will be sent out as usual.

On the first Wednesday of each month we're going to have a simple meal together before the prayer meeting. Come at 5.45pm for a meal at 6pm (in the hall downstairs) and the prayer meeting will start as usual at 7pm. **Our first Wednesday meal together will be on 1<sup>st</sup> May** and there's no need to bring anything, all the food will be provided. If you have any question or dietary requirements, please contact [Liz@holyroodevangelical.org](mailto:Liz@holyroodevangelical.org)

## Women's Discipleship in Holyrood

Are you captivated by the view of Jesus that we see in the gospels? Do you want to become more confident in understanding the gospel story? Then come along to our in person Women's Bible Studies! We'll be continuing to look at the gospels using Rebecca McLaughlin's helpful book *Navigating Gospel Truth*. There's no book to buy or homework to do, just come along as you are.

We'll run for six weeks from **this Thursday (25<sup>th</sup> April)** at 11am in the church.



Save the date: we're planning a **Ladies' Afternoon Tea on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> May** from 2 – 3.30pm so keep the date free! More details to follow.

## Meet a Modern-Day John Wycliffe

This **Thursday (25<sup>th</sup> April)** at 7.30pm we are hosting Wycliffe Bible Translators and an evening with Komi Sena. Komi Sena leads the Ife Bible translation project in Togo and works as a Bible translation adviser to a number of language groups in West Africa. Komi has an amazing story to share about the challenges and joys he has seen as God works through his word being made available in people's languages.

## Christian Fellowship Walking Group

**Now Cancelled!** Please don't come on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> April to the walk we had planned along the River Tyne (Haddington to East Linton). All other walks for this term have also been cancelled. Please contact Calum ([cmackellar@yahoo.com](mailto:cmackellar@yahoo.com)) for more information.

## Slugs and Bugs are in town!



Randall Goodgame (creator of Slugs and Bugs) will be in Edinburgh in May and is doing two family concerts for kids and all grown-ups who are young at heart!

Slugs and Bugs LIVE will be happening at Carrubbers on **Friday 10<sup>th</sup> May** at 7pm (tickets are available [here](#)) and at Hope City Church on **Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> May** at 4pm (tickets are available [here](#)).

Contact [Liz@holyroodevangelical.org](mailto:Liz@holyroodevangelical.org) for more details.

## Church Calendar

For your info and prayers:

- Tuesday: Volleyball (in the park) and Table Tennis (in the church) from 7pm
- Wednesday: Prayer meeting at 7pm in person (6.45pm for refreshments) and on Zoom
- Thursday:
  - Women's Bible Studies at 11am (in person)
  - Wycliffe Bible Translators – An evening with Koma Sena at 7.30pm (in person)
- Sunday:
  - Worship Service at 10.30am (and live streamed). Joe Barnard preaching.
  - Home Groups
- Monday:
  - Baby and Toddlers at 10am
  - Women's Ministry Team Meeting at 7pm



[www.holyroodevangelical.org](http://www.holyroodevangelical.org)

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