

Weekly Newsletter: 4 March 2025

Reflection: Speak, Lord, Your Servant Is Listening

By Joe Barnard

It's no surprise that I love a good poem. Words have power. We Christians, of all people, should understand this. Strung together, words are not like a pane of glass that simply reveals things as they are in naked fact. A great sentence, or poem, or even novel, is much more like a painting. Words draw out to the surface aspects of reality that demand contemplation and response. George MacDonald, the writer C.S. Lewis called "his master", went so far as to say that God created the world with certain metaphors in mind. To MacDonald, to compare the righteousness of God to the mountains is not an act of creative license. God made the mountains as He did so that we could have an alphabet by which to interpret the truth of divine righteousness. For MacDonald, the world was pregnant with the glory of God. To see a rock rightly was not to see a mere chunk of stone. A true vision of granite is a better vision of God. If God is the Rock of Ages, how could we *not* see through the stone into a deeper layer of reality?

I'm not sure that I would take things quite as far as MacDonald; nonetheless, I love the spirit of his thinking. Christians need more than a sanctified will and a sanctified intellect. They also need a sanctified imagination. Just as Lewis needed his own imagination to be baptised by MacDonald, we, too, need to find writers who can purify our minds until we appreciate the beauty of truth and the truth of beauty.

This week I want to share another poem with the church family. This one makes me think of the story in Luke 5 when Jesus tells Peter to move his boat out into the deeper waters. Many a preacher has used this text to challenge Christians to step further into the space of trust and obedience. The poem below captures the same idea. Although it is a good thing to live a peaceful and quiet life (c.f. 1 Tim. 2:2), in a materialistic, comfort-driven society like ours, it's important that we don't limit our ambitions to peace and quietness. Paul is case in point. It's hard to find a more venturesome soul than the great apostle to the gentiles. And I think we can learn something from his example. Once and a while it's worth taking a moment before God to ask if we are playing life too safe. It's just possible that we've been trolling in the surf when, for a while now, a still, small voice has been whispering, "Put out into the deep" (Luke 5:4).

The great benefit of heeding this voice is not the possibility of having adventures and breaking routines. Something far better is at stake. I like how the old hymn "Trust and Obey" makes the point. The hymn says, "But we never can know/the delights of his love/until all on the altar we lay." Therein lies the chief boon of total submission. To go out into deep waters is to go fishing with Jesus himself. And who could ask for more?

Here is the poem:

Disturb us, Lord, when
We are too well pleased with ourselves,
When our dreams have come true
Because we have dreamed too little,
When we arrived safely
Because we sailed too close to the shore.

Disturb us, Lord, when
With the abundance of things we possess
We have lost our thirst
For the waters of life;
Having fallen in love with life,
We have ceased to dream of eternity
And in our efforts to build a new earth,
We have allowed our vision
Of the new Heaven to dim.

Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly,
To venture on wider seas
Where storms will show your mastery;
Where losing sight of land,
We shall find the stars.

Women's Bible Studies – Online tonight!

Starting on **Tuesday 4 March** we're going to do four Bible Studies in the last couple of chapters of Luke's gospel as we prepare our hearts for Easter. We'll meet on Zoom from 7-8pm with time for prayer in small groups, please join us if you can. Contact Liz@holyroodevangelical.org if you would like the Zoom codes and don't already have them.

Act Like Men – tonight!

Join us at Hope Church Bingham on **Tuesday 4 March** for an evening men's conference to encourage men to live for King Jesus in Edinburgh and beyond. The speaker is Jeremy Walker and it's from 7-8.30pm. To reserve a place and for more details go [here](#).

Meal and Prayer Meeting

This Wednesday we'll be gathering together for a meal before the prayer meeting. Come from 5.45pm, food will be served at 6pm and we'll pray together from 7-8pm. Please contact Liz@holyroodevangelical.org if you would like to help with the dishes or clearing up at the end of the meal! Thank you!

Christianity Explored – this Sunday

Christianity Explored continues this Sunday from 5-6pm in the church. If you're new to the Christian faith or have questions, please come along – this course is for you! Contact Sam for more details (sampeterallen@gmail.com)



Book Group

This month's book group will be held on **15 March at 3.30pm** and will be at 1 Dalrymple Crescent, Musselburgh (note change of date and change of venue!). We are reading 7 Myths about singleness by Sam Allberry. Please speak to Anncris if you need further information.

OMF Conference - Japan: across the street and across the world

On **Saturday 26 April** we're hosting the OMF Conference 'Japan: across the street and across the world'. Lorna Ferguson will be speaking about the work in Japan and her plans for her next term there. Jude Tindale will share about the work that's happening amongst Japanese people in Edinburgh.



Doors open at 9.30am for a 10am start. The conference will finish at 11.30am and everyone is warmly welcome.

Church Calendar

For your info and prayers:

- Tuesday: Women's Online Bible Studies at 7pm
- Wednesday: Meal at 6pm and Prayer meeting at 7pm
- Thursday:
 - Men's Bible Studies at 10.30am in the church
 - Session Meeting at 7pm in the church
- Sunday:
 - Morning service at 10.30am – Joe Barnard preaching (live streamed)
 - Christianity Explored from 5-6pm in the church
 - Evening service at 6pm – Joe Barnard preaching (live streamed)
- Monday:
 - Baby & Toddlers Group 10am – 11.30am
 - Warm Space 12 noon to 3pm
 - Communication Team Meeting at 8pm



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