

Weekly Newsletter: 26 August 2025

Reflection: Will You Follow Christ?

By Joe Barnard

One of the dangers of Western Christianity is that faith is sometimes perceived to be a past event. A number of evangelical traditions make the so-called “sinner’s prayer” a critical part- if not *the* critical part- of experiencing salvation. People are invited to say a short prayer of repentance and faith, and, immediately afterward, pronounced to be Christians. One of the unintended consequences of this practice is that some people walk away from such experiences thinking that the Christian life is a one-time decision like getting a tattoo. Once the deal is done, life moves on. And for a lot of people, this means going back more or less to how they were living beforehand.

Given such misconceptions, it’s important to realise that faith in Jesus results in a whole new trajectory in life. Belief is not some highly touted landmark that one visits, takes a selfie, and then forgets. Belief is a road that one joins and then follows for the duration of life. This is why Christians have traditionally used pilgrimage as one of the central metaphors for understanding the life of faith. Once we profess trust in Jesus, the GPS coordinates of the heart are reprogrammed. The big question, *where are you going?* is answered in a new, hopeful way. Instead of death being the terminal destination of life, Jesus himself fills that place. The whole of life is lived with the expectation of one day appearing before the judgment seat of Christ. Being ready for that moment is the great intent that governs the day-to-day choices of a believer’s life.

Once this is understood, the question, “*Who am I following?*” takes on new significance. Much of the challenge of the Christian life stems from the difficulty of finding a way to follow Jesus in the midst of all of the distraction and temptation of the modern world. The indispensable guide for staying on track is the teaching of the Bible. A Christian holds the Bible like a traveller holds a map. It indicates the essential information we need to know in order to avoid hidden perils and to advance ever closer toward the end goal of life with God.

Here the church deserves special mention. Christians do not merely (or most importantly) read the Bible alone, but rather in community with others. This is why preaching holds such a central place in evangelical worship services. One of the main reasons we attend Sunday gatherings is to hear a faithful reading of the Bible that includes contemporary, personal application. The intention is for each believer to walk away from such sermons feeling a bit like a pilgrim who has just received instruction about a next stage of travel. We are more equipped to face imminent challenges because we have a better understanding of what it means to know Jesus and walk beside him through the struggles of life.

Now, perhaps someone is thinking, *who would do this? Who would take on such a self-engrossing calling?* The answer is anyone who appreciates what it means to be saved. There is a famous martyr of the last century who made the comment, “He is no fool who gives that which he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.” The statement is true, but insufficient. The Christian life is not just about giving up a lesser life in order to receive a better one. The Christian life is about escaping judgment and recovering freedom. We might adjust the remark to the following: “He is no fool who trades misery and death for happiness and life.” Such is the offer that Jesus holds out to *you* right now. He says, “Give me your sin, shame, and death, and I will give you my righteousness, honour, and life.”

What person would agree to such terms? The answer is anyone who understands them.

Home Groups: 1 Thessalonians - this Wednesday

This term we will be spending time together in our home groups exploring 1 Thessalonians. Jon Gemmell writes ‘It will strengthen our faith, reassure us of God’s work in our lives, challenge us about our shared holiness, and prepare us for steadfast endurance through hope. There is a rich journey ahead, filled with discovery, insight, and encouragement, waiting for us in these pages.

Let’s join together as we hear God’s Word encouraging us to **Stand Fast.**’

This Wednesday we’ll be meeting in the church building at 7pm for an Overview of 1 Thessalonians. The session will be livestreamed and tea and coffee will be served beforehand (come from 6.45pm).

Please note there will be no prayer bulletin this week.



Here’s the plan for the following weeks:

- Week 2- 1 Thessalonians 1:1-2:12 (Home Group Launch in the church building - Wednesday 10 September)
- Week 3- 1 Thessalonians 2:13-3:10 (Wednesday 24 September)
- Week 4- 1 Thessalonians 3:11-4:12 (Wednesday 8 October)
- Week 5- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11 (Wednesday 22 October)
- Week 6- 1 Thessalonians 5:12-5:28 (Wednesday 12 November)
- Week 7- 1 Thessalonians Wash-Up (Everyone in the church building – Wednesday 26 November)

Graham Monteith

Graham Monteith’s funeral will take place on Monday 8 September in Meadowbank and Willowbrae church at 11.30am. There will be a private cremation at Warriston Crematorium beforehand. Phil Hair is taking the service and continue to pray for Edna and the family as they grieve.

Lorna Ferguson's Prayer Letter

Lorna is now back in Japan and every month she writes a prayer letter to help us pray for her. If you don't already receive it and would like to, please contact Lorna (lorna.ferguson@omfmail.com) and she can add you to her mailing list. Thank you!

Prayer Meetings and Meals – Autumn Term

From September, we will resume our rhythm of meeting to pray on 1st, 3rd and 5th (if there is one) Wednesdays of the month from 7-8pm in the church. A Zoom option will also be available for those who can't make it in person but this won't be linked to the main meeting.

The elders have agreed the following plan for the autumn term, please save the dates –

September: Wednesday 3rd - Prayer Meeting with Tim Hayward (Open Doors). No meal beforehand.
Sunday 21st - Church family meal after the morning service

October: Wednesday 1st - Prayer Meeting with Fiona Christie (Edinburgh City Mission). Meal beforehand.

November: Wednesday 5th - Prayer Meeting with Joanna Manners (Friends International). Meal beforehand.

Act Like Men – tonight!

Act Like Men is back with their next evening conference tonight at Hope Church Bingham (135 Mountcastle Drive South) from 7-8.30pm.

The speaker is Robert Briggs and they will be looking at the importance of what "We Confess." Broken Wharfe will be providing books.

Come along for an evening men's conference to encourage each other to live for King Jesus in Edinburgh and beyond.



An Evening with Josh Garrels – tonight!

St Columba's Free Church are hosting 'An Evening with Josh Garrels' tonight at 8pm. Josh is a Christian singer/ songwriter and for tickets and more details go [here](#).

Missionary Update – Saturday 6 September

On Saturday 6 September we're looking forward to having a missionary update with our three Holyrood missionaries (Lorna, James and the Sorsamos). Join us online from 9-10am and Zoom codes will be sent out nearer the time.

Tranent Community Church

It was a privilege to be at the launch service for Tranent Community Church on Saturday and you can watch the service [here](#) if you missed it. Please note there's no sound for the first 4 minutes.

East of Scotland Gospel Partnership – Sunday 26 October

Save the date! As a church we are part of the East of Scotland Gospel Partnership and one of the aims of the partnership is to express unity by coming together for a yearly Gospel Partnership evening service. This will take place on Sunday 26 October at Charlotte Chapel. There will be no evening service at Holyrood and we look forward to attending the joint service instead.

Thank you from Wycliffe Bible Translators – Summer Appeal

'More people than ever before now have access to God's word in their own language. Thanks to the generosity of supporters like you, over the past year 40 million people have received the Bible for the very first time...Thank you for your gift of £8,103 for Hannu and Hazel Sorsamo. Together we are unlocking God's word for every heart. Blessings, Cameron (Wycliffe Supporter Care Team Leader)'

Abbeyhill Baptist – Prayer Walk

Andy Harding (Pastor at Abbeyhill) is organising a weekly prayer walk for half an hour in the local area on Wednesday mornings from 10.30-11am. We are all very welcome to join them.

Church Calendar

For your info and prayers:

- Wednesday: Overview of 1 Thessalonians at 7pm in person (and live streamed)
- Friday: Holyrood Youth 6.30pm - 9pm at 112 Milton Road West
- Sunday:
 - Morning service at 10.30am – Joe Barnard preaching (live streamed)
 - Evening service at 6pm – Jon Gemmell preaching (live streamed)
- Baby and Toddler Group: 10am – 11.30am



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