



# **PORTSOY CHURCH**

## **WEEKLY BULLETIN 2/5/21**

Welcome to the Church Weekly Bulletin which temporarily replaces our usual Church Family News (CFN) and will be our contact with both the Church family and the community until we can resume all our usual activities. A copy will be posted each Saturday on the community notice board outside the Church and available on the Church website on the CFN page. **John Gow will also arrange to provide copies to those in the community who cannot access on the website. If you want a copy to be delivered please contact him on 07941 511192.**

### **Weekly prayer topic**

**"Be generous, and you will be prosperous. Help others, and you will be helped."  
Proverbs 11:25**

Since the beginning of the covid crisis so many people worldwide have been amazingly generous donating food, finances and their time to help those in great need, Give thanks and praise for their generosity and kindness which brought hope, joy and support where most needed.

### **Let's Talk**

There has been a fair bit of interest in our Bible discussion group, 'Let's Talk.' The preference seems to be to have it in person rather than on Zoom, but the issue with that just now is there's a maximum of six people allowed to gather outdoors, and we'd go likely go over that. This rule could well change after the next government update, so it's probably best to delay starting by a week, making it w/c 17 May – hopefully then nobody will be disappointed. If the rule doesn't change, then we'll Zoom it!

### **Christian Aid Week 10<sup>th</sup> May – 16<sup>th</sup> May**

Christian Aid Week is nearly upon us. This year the focus is on Eastern Kenya where drought and unpredictable weather events have destroyed crops, killed livestock and threaten people's survival. For the next 2 Sundays envelopes for donations to Christian Aid will be available here in Church or if you prefer to give online, a Just Giving link is available on the Church Facebook page and on the 'Home' page of the Website. Please try to imagine yourself having to walk for 6 hours every other day to collect enough water for just the bare essentials of daily life. Then please give what you can to help, and show that we care for our global family. Thank you.

### **Weekly message from John Gow**

For those who aren't aware (and there can't be many!) we go to the polls on Thursday to elect the next Scottish government. Whether or not politics is your thing, it's an important day.

I'm not going to get into the rights and wrongs of the political parties, this isn't the place for that, but over the next few days we're all going to hear a lot of debates, we'll hear a lot of promises, a lot of manifesto commitments. I wonder if many of the people who'll be engaging in the debates will actually have read each of the parties' manifestos, though? If they won't have, I can understand why. They're all so long! We all know that the parties' manifestos set out all the reasons why they want us to vote for them, but in essence everything in them is designed for one thing, and that's to make us happy. And happiness is our subject for this week.

Jesus' sermon on the mount has to be one the best speeches ever - far better than any politician could come up with. And it begins with a manifesto for happiness - it begins with what we've come to know as the Beatitudes.

Beatitude is a Latin word, and it means a state of happiness or bliss. The first is '*Blessed are the poor in spirit...*' This is about recognising our helplessness, it's about having humility. And humility doesn't mean thinking less of ourselves, it means thinking of ourselves less. Humility is admitting to God that we need his help. It improves our friendships too. Nobody like being around people who boast and brag about themselves all the time, but having humility means taking pleasure in the achievements of our friends, and that makes us happier people ourselves.

'*Blessed are those who mourn.*' Mourning, whether it's over the loss of a life, the breakdown of a relationship, the realisation that a dream won't come true, they won't make us happy, but the comfort we are given to help us through it, the comfort of God, of Jesus, is a blessing that we all receive. And we become better people for it, I think, we learn from it. We learn about ourselves.

'*Blessed are the meek.*' Going by the original Greek meaning, the word 'meek' is used to describe taming an animal, or putting a bridle on a horse, so it's more a picture of power under control than of what we usually think of as meekness. Power under control. Happy is the person who lets God take control of their life.

'*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.*' Righteousness is what God requires of us and of everyone, it's the standards that God sets - like seeing that justice is done, and not out of revenge or spite, but out of love. And righteousness goes hand in hand with mercy - 'Blessed are the merciful.' We can be the most righteous people in the world, but if we don't extend that mercy to those around us, then it's not a lot of use. What we give is returned to us, and that way everyone is happy.

'*Blessed are the pure in heart.*' You could translate this as saying, 'happy is the person who is genuine, who is authentic, who's not a phony, because they will see God.' Does that mean we won't ever have a bad thought again in our lives? No, but we need to take our masks off (not literally!), don't pretend we are what we're not, and we'll be happy when we know God is seeing us as we are.

'*Blessed are the peacemakers.*' Maybe you've been in a meeting where everyone's complaining and being negative, then someone chips in with something that causes everyone to say, 'we never thought about it like that,' and the whole climate changes. That's the kind of person God wants us to be. And the more of us that are like that, the happier we will all be.

And the last two of the beatitudes is really two for the price of one. '*Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,*' and '*Blessed are you when people insult you.*' There are people in the world who are so in tune with God that their relationship with him just seems to flow effortlessly, who just exude goodness. Well, people still try to find fault in them, in the godly life they lead, simply because folk can't find any other faults in them. I think we can all strive to be like them - those who are in tune with God, that is - and if people persecute us for doing what's right, I think we can deal with that and be perfectly happy about it.

So those are the Beatitudes, God's manifesto for happiness. The election result on Thursday can't make everyone happy, but God can.

## Information

If you have any information or contributions which you feel should be included in the Weekly Bulletin please send to Ian Whewell [ian.whewell@btinternet.com](mailto:ian.whewell@btinternet.com) by Friday evening each week.