

Security - Luke 13:31-35

I read this story this week,

“It was late at night. We woke up suddenly because of the noise of shelling and realised that we were again in the midst of a battle. I heard a knock at our bedroom door. Two of our young children came in and said, “Dad, Mum, it's frightening in our room. Can we come into your bedroom. If we die, let's die together!”

“We started praying together and sang a few hymns, after which they fell asleep, but I could not. Many questions were coming to my mind: Can the Lord keep us safe another time? Should we go and take refuge in the nearby shelter and risk our lives *en route*?”

“I put on my clothes and looked out of the window in the direction of the shelter. The electricity wires had been cut by shrapnel and we were in the dark. Cars were ablaze just in front of the shelter not far from our own car, but no one dared to go to extinguish the fire because of the shelling. Dark smoke was blown in the direction of the shelter and I could hear screams coming from there.”

“I heard a knock at our door of our home. Some of our neighbours asked if they could stay with us and sat down. 'Please let us stay here,' they said. 'Why don't we all go to the shelter?' I asked. 'No, they replied, your home is safer because it is a house of prayer; please read to us from the Bible.'”

Joy filled his heart as he read from God's word.

Your home is safer because it is a house of prayer!

What gives security?

Security and protection are the basic needs for every life. The philosopher Abraham Maslow constructed a theory called *the hierarchy of human needs* – where it had security and protection, as an essential part of his pyramid.

As far back as June 1945, the U.S. Secretary of State reported this to his government....”The battle of peace has to be fought on two fronts. The first is the security front where victory spells freedom from fear. The second is the economic and social front where victory means freedom from want. Only victory on both fronts can assure the world of an enduring peace.... No Provisions that can be written into the Charter will enable the Security

Council to make the world secure from war if men and women have no security in their homes and their jobs.”

David Attenborough made a video of a mother tiger caring for her new born cubs and lifting them up by the scruff of the neck with her long sharp teeth – this tiger can bite with the force of nearly 500 kilos, but lifting her cubs requires the gentlest touch.

Do these cubs feel secure with this type of protection?

I'm sure that they do, when you have a tiger in your corner, then you have little to fear.

What's the time Mr Wolf?!! Goes a popular child's game and children can expect a chase from the bad hungry wolf. If Mr Wolf catches you then you are out! Nobody likes the big bad wolf! But we all face big bad wolves, at some time in our life, and the big bad wolf can take a number of forms.

But how do we protect ourselves; where do we find security? When trouble strikes or challenges present themselves!

Our Gospel reading today tells us that Jesus faced increasing pressure.

Even some Pharisees, who for the most part had been his adversaries, are now warning him that Herod smells his blood. It's time to move on!

Herod is on your case and pursuing you!

How did Jesus respond?

He responded with faith!

He replied, *“Go and tell that fox, I will keep on driving out demons and healing people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal! In any case I must press on today and tomorrow and the next day – for surely no prophet can die outside of Jerusalem.”*

Remarkable words of faith by Jesus.

He shows here that he knows that God is on his side as his protector. In the words of the psalmist, “He knew God was before and behind me and He has laid His hand upon me.”

He is not going to allow the likes of Herod the fox to take away his mission.

His mission was simple, "To drive out demons and to heal people." His heart was with those who were struggling and in need of God's love and it's not going to be a cruel dictator like Herod who will stop this mission.

We have come through two very difficult years of Covid and we are still in the midst of it. We have watched a country being attacked and we have been touched by the Ukrainian people and we are witnessing a war which affects us all.

The Church of Scotland is facing its own particular storm, decreasing memberships all over...fewer ministers and finances are dwindling and so they are looking at the bigger picture of a constructing a realistic plan which involves ministry cuts and yet provides ministry to the whole of Scotland - is it sustainable? – time will tell!

But this impacts us at Cadder church, as it impacts every congregation throughout Scotland. It looks as though each church having their own ministry will be a thing of the past, for over the next five years ministers will be spread across the churches. Glasgow Presbytery has been put into 5 zones and our particular zone has presently 22 churches and the allocation for our zone is 10.5 ministers. So, you can see the challenge that the church is facing and the plan has to be formed and presented to Presbytery by the end of June.

Challenging Yes! Frightening Yes! On the rock face, like one of those eggs and little chicks Yes!

But at this time, we must turn to God, and lean into his Word, His love and care and protection and guidance and hear again Jesus words, "*Fear not little flock, it is your Father's good will to give you the Kingdom of Heaven.*"

Jesus knew that his final destiny was Jerusalem. This was where he was heading and he knew that the cross was waiting for him there.

Three days, he said, and he will have reached his destination.

He says that no prophet will die outside of Jerusalem. Herod of Galilee would have no jurisdiction upon him.

It's a great faith to trust that God is with us in every situation of life and that ultimately God is in control. He is our ultimate security.

President Zelensky, said "*God sees everything and answers in such a way that you cannot hide. There is no such bunker, where you can hide from God's*

answer. Even if you destroy all our Ukrainian cathedrals and churches, you will not destroy our sincere faith in Ukraine and God.”

This faith has been seen in God's people down through the history of the church.

Martin Luther King in the midst of his struggles to transform unjust structures, knew that he was a target. How did he manage to keep on going? Where did he find his security?

He constructed 10 rules which all his followers had to commit to;

- Meditate daily on the teachings and life of Jesus.
- Remember always that the non-violent movement seeks justice and reconciliation - not victory.
- Walk and talk in the manner of love, for God is love.
- Pray daily to be used by God in order that all men might be free.
- Sacrifice personal wishes in order that all men might be free.
- Observe with both friend and foe the ordinary rules of courtesy.
- Seek to perform regular service for others and for the world.
- Refrain from the violence of fist, tongue, or heart.
- Strive to be in good spiritual and bodily health.
- Follow the directions of the movement and of the captain on a demonstration.

In these 10 rules, he discovered his sense of purpose; His sense of Mission; His sense of what he was doing was the right thing as he challenge the unjust structure of his world and like Jesus, he believed that God was with him in the midst of his struggles.

There is power in this belief, that the eternal God, the very power behind the universe is with you when you challenge unjust structures.

Seeking to transform unjust structures in society is one of the marks of mission that the Church of Scotland has recently adopted..

Where are the places that you feel most safe, or in whose company do you feel most secure?

Where can we find strength – of course from God's word, from fellowship with other Christians, from coming to church and being in this sanctuary, a place of prayer and peace. We may find strength from our families and even being in nature, where we experience God's spirit in all that he has created.

It's important to find our sanctuary – that place of peace and protection - and be strengthened by being in that space.

Mother Theresa used to tell this story of a six-year-old orphan brought into her home in Calcutta. The sisters rescued him from the streets where he was dying and nursed him back to health. He found love and security amongst the sisters in the home.

Once the little boy was fit and well, he was due to be transferred to another orphanage, and the sisters gave him a farewell gift – a small packet of sugar. That doesn't sound much, but it is a highly prized commodity amongst the poor. As he walked through the gates, the boy saw another child being carried in from the streets, obviously in great need.

He walked back to the sisters and handed the packet of sugar over, saying he wanted the sick child to have it. Mother Theresa asked him why he had chosen to do such a thing.

The boy simply said, "It's what Jesus would do and so what God would want." That child had a sharp grasp of the ways of God. In his simple way he understood something of the profound mystery of God as seen in Jesus.

There is a beautiful verse in the Bible at 1 John 2v6, "Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did."

Jesus walked in the security and safety of his Father, and so he was and is able to give us that same protection, like a mother hen with her chicks.

He said, "*O Jerusalem, O Jerusalem, how I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings and you were not willing.*"

Will we allow him today to gather us under his protection and his care and to walk with him on life's journey?

Amen.