

Word For The Week

22 March 2019

Preaching Dates

24 March 2019

Graham Horne (am) at
High Blantyre Baptist Church

John Perkins (am) at
Bearsden Baptist Church, Glasgow

Alex Ramsay (am) at Banton Independent
Baptist Church, Kilsyth

Charles Sommerville (am) at
Kelty Evangelical Church, Fife

George Sprott (am) at
Hawick Baptist Church

Hugh Tannock (am) at
Maryhill Evangelical Church, Glasgow

Peter Trotter (am) at
Friendship Church, Carand, Romania

Cheryl Leckie (am + pm) at
Ayr Baptist Church

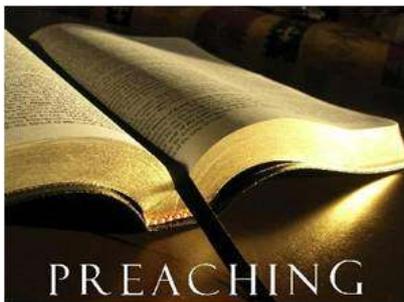
Charles Sommerville (pm) at
Shettleston Baptist Church

26 March 2019

Charles Sommerville at Barnards Court
Mission, Gospel Music Festival, Greenock

27 March 2019

Charles Sommerville (pm) at
Shettleston Baptist Church, Glasgow



“Welcome the Stranger”

By Andrew N. Swanson

We are reminded to welcome the “stranger” and to “speak out on behalf of the voiceless, and for the rights of all who are vulnerable.”

Welcome the stranger, as long as they belong to the same homogenous group as us; reach out, as long as they don't smell and use offensive language; invite someone to church, as long as they know how to behave; offer food to the hungry, but keep an eye on how full their plate is; everyone is welcome here, but we'll decide who they sit beside, we don't want anyone to be offended. To be an inclusive church might, for some, feel like a mountain has to be climbed and for anyone who has trekked to the heights will know that a mountain is not an easy place to reach. It takes planning, perseverance and patience to reach the summit. There is pain, but, once you have reached the top, you can see for miles around and revel in the beauty and majesty of God's creation. The mountain is a place of retreat, a place to reflect and for many a place to dream dreams.

It was on a mountain that Jesus gave his first great sermon (Matthew 5). It was on a mountain he saw the disciples rowing in a storm and he went to their aid (Matthew 14:22-26). It was on a mountain top that Jesus saw the last stretch of the road, a stretch of road that led to another mount, the mount of Calvary (Luke 9:28-31).

Jesus continually withdrew from people, from daily life activities and from the demands of his ministry to be alone with his Father and pray. Jesus' solitude and silence is a major theme in the Gospels. It's how he began his ministry. It's how he prepared and made important decisions. It's how he dealt with troubling emotions. It's how he cared for his soul. It's how he taught his disciples. It's how he prepared for his death on the cross. Likewise, we need to find our mountainside to find time to pray, to listen for his voice, to fix our eyes on him and discern His will. In the haze of life, in the uncertainty around us, turn to Jesus. Lives have been transformed, families renewed, churches revived because men and women have climbed the mountain top to be alone with God.

But, there also comes a time when we must descend. God calls us down from those breath-taking moments, down from the mountaintop, and out into the world. We inevitably must descend from our moments of profound glory, celebration, clarity and joy, into the valleys of this world where life is messy, confusing, challenging and inhospitable.

The place of solitude is necessary for our time with God, but never should we shut ourselves away from others; our ears have to be open to their cries; our heart open to their tears and our eyes open to see their need. We have to come down from our mountains to live out the calling to reach out and welcome the stranger.