

Word For The Week

4 September 2020

Preaching Dates

Sunday 6 September 2020

Brian Crockett (am) socially distanced at Crookston Baptist Church

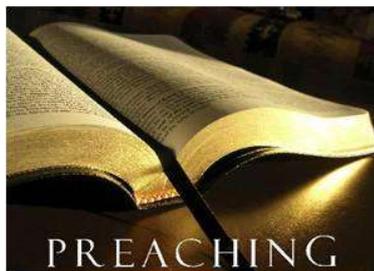
Stephen Ilett (am) via Zoom at Dingwall Baptist Church

Andrea Mill (am) at Bristo Baptist Church being streamed on Zoom.

Stephen Morton (am) online at Coatbridge Baptist Church

Thursday 10 September 2020

Charles Sommerville (pm) via Zoom, Thursday evenings Bible Study on Philippians. For details: drcharles.sommerville@sky.com



“Life On The Fringe”

By Sylvia Jones

Luke 8 43-48

In this passage we have the story of the woman in the crowd touching the hem of Jesus cloak and being instantly healed from a debilitating and discriminatory blood loss condition. We're told of Jesus reaction and his enquiry to know who had touched him, and Peter's reply. Don't you just love Peter?! Ever practical and ever ready to put his foot in it?! He points out that lots of people would have touched Jesus. The woman, however, summons yet more courage and owns up and in so doing experiences the affirmation and compassion of Jesus!

The NRSV refers to the woman touching 'the fringe of his clothes' (v44). It's likely that this refers to the tassels on the edge of Jesus' prayer shawl where each strand represents the commands and promises of God. As the wearer prays, they would grasp each of these strands, figuratively taking hold of the promises of God and the God who declared them. I'd like to think the woman knew all this and relied on this deep-seated knowledge of Scripture and tradition as she reached out in faith to be healed. Her situation had made her curious and desperate enough to take the risk and make the connection.

During these past months we've seen and heard of people becoming desperate and curious enough to reach out and touch the fringes of the church. People not used to attending church have been accessing online meetings and services. Like the woman in our story they might have tried every other avenue to address or answer the issues in their lives. Maybe they are returning to God or the church because of some deep-rooted memory of tradition. Perhaps prejudice or exclusivity prevented them making that connection, until now...

What's our response going to be?

Are we going to be like Jesus? Driven by curious compassion, he persisted in finding and making connection with the woman. He tenderly calls her 'daughter'; a term not used on any other occasion which proclaims relationship, inclusion, and affirmation.

How are we going to make connection with the people who have been living on the fringes of our churches during this time? How will we show compassion, tenderness, and relationship? Or will we be like Peter, dismissively accepting the situation for what it is, asserting that nothing more can be done?

Let's be Christlike!