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Benbecula and Carinish Pastoral Letter

Dear Church Family and Community Friends,

Hello once again! Well another week of quarantine and so another letter! I hope and pray that you are all well and giving thanks for the amazing spell of weather that has certainly lifted our spirits and allowed us all to enjoy a good bit of time outside amongst our other commitments. I hope that you are all coping well with the current restrictions. If for some reason that is not the case please do get in touch with us, an elder or someone that can assist you.

In this letter I really would like to build upon the thoughts of the last letter on the theme of waiting. We had a quick peek at Acts 1 but focused on verse 4...*Do not leave Jerusalem but wait for the gift my Father promised*. I hope that you have been able to make use of the opportunity that we have been given to 'wait' for the Lord this past week and that the times of waiting have been a blessing. If so, great! If not, there is still time!

To take the reflection forward I would like to move along slightly in Acts to chapter 2.14...*Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd...* Verses 17-41 give us the words of his first sermon and the effect they had on those who heard him. I would encourage you to read them. Pretty good stuff really. However, what I would like to draw your attention to is the man Peter himself. We know him to be close to Jesus as one of the three disciples that were part of the inner circle. He is the 'Rock' (Peter or Petros means rock in Greek) on which the Church is built (Matthew 16.18). He was the guy crazy enough to try and walk on water (and he did). He is guy who denied Jesus three times. He was the one who cut off the ear of the temple guardsman. He put his foot in mouth on the mount of transfiguration. He was impulsive and a bit unrefined, as was the reputation of most Galileans. Yet, in our passage, we see him in Acts chapter 2 stand up and deliver an absolute gem of sermon with authority and leadership. So what happened? Obviously he was working under the power of the Holy Spirit. This, however, was not a one time only situation for Peter. As we read through Acts and other books in the New Testament we see that Peter continued to minister in this manner. *'Silver and gold have I not but what I have I give to you...Acts 3.6* Was he perfect? No, of course not. Did he get every decision right taking the Church forward? No. But he was transformed. He was transformed in the waiting. He was transformed in the isolation with the Lord. As were other disciples. Paul's transformation began on the road to Damascus and the days that followed. Jesus himself regularly isolated himself and waited to receive from the Lord what He needed to minister among us and ultimately endure the cross. What I am getting at is that the fruit of waiting is transformation. That transformation, it would seem in scripture, comes from isolating oneself and waiting for the Lord.

Waiting on the Lord never appears to be easy. At least, that is my experience. There is always something that comes to mind that I could do instead and with good reason. Waiting therefore, must be an intentional choice as we recognise our need for it. Because we may also recognise our need to be transformed to live the life to which God has called us, Romans 12.2.

To be honest I do not want to come out of this quarantine the same way I went in. I hope that as I continue to wait upon the Lord that I may be transformed. Transformed to be more and more like him. Transformed to be a better father, husband, minister, friend and neighbour. Transformed to live life according to His will in His strength. I see the men and women of the Bible wait and experience the transformation God had for them to lead a full life in and through Christ. That is what I want as well. So I wait. And we can wait together.

As the restrictions endure let us continue to remember one another in prayer and those who continue to work in essential jobs thinking particularly of those in healthcare. We are fortunate to not have any confirmed cases of Covid here but many will no doubt have friends or family with firsthand account of the hardships of this season. We pray for them. I have been thinking lately of those who mourn the loss of friends and family the world over and have been forced to do so without much or any contact or even a service. We remember you all and again thank you for looking out for one another and your neighbours.

I will be trying to put together a Zoom drop in type chat room next week. So if you are online keep an eye on the Facebook pages for details of when that may take place.

Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you. 2 Thessalonians 3.16

In Christ

Rev Drew Kuzma