



PORTSOY CHURCH

FAMILY NEWS 28/4/24

Welcome to our weekly news bulletin, keeping you up to date with the latest information on what's happening in Church life in Portsoy, Fordyce and Sandend and also giving you a digest of John's sermon for the week. It is also available on the CFN page of the Church website.

If you know of someone in the community who isn't online and would like a copy delivered please contact John on 07941 511192.

Weekly Prayer Topic

"My mind and my body may grow weak, but God is my strength; he is all I ever need."

Psalm 73:26

May our loving God remember home carers, who are often unable to look after their clients properly due to shortage of time and staff and inadequate funding. May he help them to remain patient and kind, especially in stressful situations.

Coffee Evening: On 14th May at 7pm Portsoy is hosting a coffee evening with entertainment by Beyond Boyndie. This is a joint social event with North Aberdeenshire Guilds Together. Entry is by donation and the event is open to everyone not just Guild members. Please come along and support us for this first social event for the new organisation.

Coffee 'n Company: Coffee 'n Company is every Tuesday morning from 10.00am until 12 noon. Please come along and enjoy a cup of coffee or tea, scone and pancakes and a time to catch up with friends old and new.

Monday Prayers: Our morning prayer gathering takes place every Monday at 8.30am in the Church Centre. Everyone is welcome!

Well Café: Every Friday during term time from 9.15 to 11.15 providing free tea, coffee, fruit and snacks together with a play area for the children.

Weekly message from John Gow

Luke 15: 11-24

The Parable of the Prodigal Son, which we're looking at in church this week, is a familiar one to most of us. In it we're introduced to a man with two sons, so we can surmise that this is a story about relationships.

It's the younger son, the one we call Prodigal, we'll look at here. He said to his father, '*give me my share of the property now,*' and we're told that the father '*divided his property between his two sons.*' The father didn't have to do it and it would have caused him some pain, some heartache and probably some shame as well, to go along with his son's wishes. But still, he granted the request. Maybe because he knew that while he could say no, he could force his son to stay, he could never force him to like him to love him like a son should. So he gave him what he wanted and let him go.

We can learn a few messages from the parable, and this is the first one. It's not hard to work out that the father represents God. And, as happened with this father, we turn our backs on our Father, insisting on going our own way and pleasing ourselves, He won't try to stop us. Much as it grieves

him to do it, I'm sure, he'll let us go, and allow us to make our mistakes. It's called free will, and that's something we're all given.

The son in the parable received what he asked for. We're told he converted everything he'd received from his father, his land, buildings and livestock, into cash. These were things his father had worked for all his life, but to the son, all they had was monetary value, and what it meant to his father, well, that didn't matter to him.

And then he left, he went to a '*country far away*.' He seemed to want to get as far away from his father as possible, he wanted nothing more to do with him, he didn't want to be in his life. Maybe there was conflict, maybe he felt he was being overlooked, maybe he was just tired of living under somebody else's rules. But whatever, he turned his back on the relationship he'd had with him.

This is another lesson we can learn. Maybe sometimes we want the blessing of God, but we shy away from having a true relationship with him. We want to enjoy the good things that come from God, but without really having him involved in our lives. We don't want to live by his rules. We want to run our lives our own way, without interference, and by doing that, without even realising it, we're putting distance between ourselves and God.

For a while after the son left home, life was good. He spent this part of his life eating, drinking and making merry. And then it all fell apart, he lost all he all had, his money ran out, his so-called friends deserted him. The best job he could get was feeding pigs which, for a Jewish person, really was the lowest of the low. And, ironically, they ate better than he did. And this was where, we're told, he '*came to his senses*.'

The son swallowed his pride and returned to his father. And he didn't make excuses for himself, he didn't gloss over what he'd done wrong, he didn't try to sugarcoat things. And he recognised the cause of his problem, '*I have sinned against God and against you*,' he said to his dad.

And here's where we can learn our final and most important lesson from the Parable of the Prodigal Son. When we find ourselves distant from God, in a '*country far away*,' like the son, when we've pressed ahead and done our own thing, without a thought for how God wants us to live, without a care for his advice or his rules, there's always a way back. And the good news is that when we do take the way back, he'll be there waiting. And, as Jesus says in John 6:37: '*Whoever comes to me I will never drive away*.'