

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Since my last pastoral letter, which I believe caused a little concern and in which I was making a call to ‘reach out’ with the truth of the Gospel, we have had what on the surface was a big Christian event, namely the coronation. The coronation of King Charles III, a monarch who had previously styled himself as a defender of all faiths. But when it came to the day, Charles, after the Archbishop of Canterbury said that the Church of England ‘*will seek to foster an environment in which people of all faiths and beliefs may live freely*’, did take an oath to maintain the Protestant Reformed Religion and the settlement of the Church of England.

The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Rt Rev Dr Iain Greenshields, in presenting a Bible to the King said, ‘*Sir: to keep you ever mindful of the law and the Gospel of God as the Rule for the whole life and government of Christian Princes, receive this Book, **the most valuable thing that this world affords**. Here is wisdom; this is the royal law; these are the lively Oracles of God.*’

And so, the nations of the United Kingdom have a Christian monarch as head of state, and head of the Church of England, serving in a multicultural and pluralistic society. All UK based Christians live in this challenging society, where for the majority of people the ‘most valuable thing this world affords’ is not the Word of God. It is rather a society that values the word of God less and doesn’t necessarily see value in organised religion, other than the ‘good works’ we do. Society instead places a high value in the individual rights of the person, and this is, I believe, a worldview that the Church of Scotland is buying into.

The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland takes place in the third week of May, and will have got underway when this latter is issued. It will, no doubt, be taken up with the woes of the church. Declining numbers will be discussed – numbers of members, of elders, of professions of faith and baptisms, of ministers, and of money. Yet at the same time there will be celebration of the work of the church: new ways of doing church; of equality, diversity and inclusion; of our voice into matters of national and international importance, such as the legacies of slavery, of net zero, earthquakes in Syria, cost of living and much more. But what I doubt we will hear is much about Jesus and His primary mission given to His people.

The closing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Matthew finishes thus,

28¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

I wonder, is the church going where Jesus has told us to go? Is the church worshipping him, or doubting him? Is the church doubting what should be the undoubtable, that the authority given Jesus is done so by God the Father? And lastly, I wonder, what is the church doing about making disciples and baptising them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

That surely should be the focus if ever the church is to grow. The church, that is you and I are called not look like the world but rather be salt and light to it (Matthew 5.13-16). Yes, that passage mentions shining our light before others ‘that they may see your good deeds’ but it also says, ‘and glorify your Father in heaven’.

That is done by bringing others to a living faith in Christ Jesus as Saviour and Lord, that they too may glorify God.

The young Chapel Royal chorister who started the proceedings, welcomed King Charles to Westminster Abbey 'in the name of the King of Kings'. So too, is the church called to welcome people into a relationship with the Sovereign and Almighty God, through that same King of Kings, the Lord Jesus Christ. We should all be guided by all of Jesus' commands in our lives, including the great commission at the end of Mathew's Gospel, for Jesus is 'King of Kings'.

As I noted, this is not a view shared by much of society and as each year passes our society fracture lines between secularism and religion grow. I may sound doom laden, but please trust me I am not, for victory is secure, and was secured the moment our heavenly Father sent His Son. I recently used the Nicene Creed as part of our prayers in worship. Now although it is a credal statement and so comes under the authority of the word of God contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, it is recognised in all three major corners of the Christian world (Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox) as containing authoritative doctrinal rules.

What am I saying.? Namely this, as the world changes, as society becomes more hostile to the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ, as we see secular laws threatening prayer, preaching and the proclamation of the Gospel, the answer is not to move in the way of the world, but to anchor ourselves to the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith. God is creator. Jesus is also God and died for our sin, and will come again to judge the living and the dead (yes the victory is His), and Holy Spirit is here now as life giver to those who know Jesus. Life may be difficult at times, and become harder as we look ahead, but life is wonderful in the Lord, and that's a message the world needs to hear. Hallelujah and Amen

Your servant in Christ, *Pastor Mike* (Minister, GMC)



Membership Service: Sunday 26th July, 10.30am

PROFESSION OF FAITH in Jesus Christ, King of Kings



Join us as the GMC family grows

THANK YOU for supporting the mission of GMC ministry to our church family and for our community. Please continue to journey with us in 2023

- **PRAYER**: will you pray for opportunities to change lives for Jesus?
- **PEOPLE**: will you participate by offering some of your time each week or month?
- **POUNDS**: will you make a regular offering to the work of our church?

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