

Coach House Church **BEACONS**

STOP, LOOK, LISTEN.. THINK

26TH JULY 2021

Stop, Look, Listen.... Think

If I mentioned the name David Prowse, then many of the film buffs amongst us would immediately recall that he was the actor that played Darth Vader in the original Star Wars films. However, before the intergalactic imagery and 'I am your Father' lines, David Prowse was famous for an altogether different role.

Many of us will recall the Green Cross Man (and if you are even older maybe even Tufty Fluffytail!) – figures used on TV to promote safety when crossing a road. David Prowse brought the Green Cross Man to life and became a landmark figure in TV campaigns. The slogan, Stop, Look, Listen, Think, became well known throughout schools and general life as the Green Cross man teleported to various locations to help kids cross the road.

The adverts were usually rounded off with a 'I can't be here every time you cross the road, so remember the Green Cross Code Stop, Look, Listen...Think'.

As we draw to a close on the beacons (at least for the summer), we can consider much wisdom shared in the last 16 months or so, many of which may have caused us to stop and think. It is with great pride I look at the body of work which has been laid down for the benefit of others by the talents of the speaking team of the Coach House Church. I was given a collection of the printouts the other day and I am amazed at the effort and wisdom laid down. It is good to pause and reflect on where we have come from on our journey since we began.

As we gradually move out of lockdown and restrictions are lifted in our churches, we perhaps should also pause to consider our next moves and take stock of where God wants to lead us? Either looking back or looking forward encompasses the same actions – Stop And Look. We reflect on where we have come from or we survey what lies ahead and plan strategies to move forward. As a church, we will look at Ecclesiastes briefly in September, and as we do so, we should be reminded that however we look back or look forward, it is really important that we view things through the correct lens. What I mean by this, is that we should consider all things through the perspective of our journey with God – otherwise, as the writer of 'Ecclesiastes points out – everything is meaningless.

The point here, is that whatever we do has to have a reason or purpose. The Green Cross Man always appeared when there was a need to cross a road safely – there was an identifiable need and purpose. I feel sorry for people who go through life, especially in today's challenging times, without a purpose.

Let us just pause and consider this for a moment...Think. Why do we do the things we do? What is the purpose of our efforts? If we do not consider eternity with God a real thing then what is life all about? These are the kind of questions raised in Ecclesiastes. Where is the focus? What drives our actions?

As Christians our perspective of the future, changes and challenges the way we live our lives today. It becomes the lens through which we view our actions and gives meaning and purpose to our lives. The Bible calls this Hope. To have hope in our lives, to have direction and focus, will help us to push through tough times and help us navigate through times of loss, sorrow and pain. I think that going through these times of restrictions and Covid have meant that we have had our sense of purpose challenged. The beacons were born out of the challenges, so looking back we can see the positive response to a negative situation – well over 300 encouragements in a time of great challenge and change.

I am reminded that the Bible is full of these kinds of encouragements to keep on keeping on. To encourage means to give confidence, or hope to someone. But how can we encourage if there is no hope? Again, we have to think about this. The writer to the Hebrews put it like this in chapter 3 verse 6

Hebrews 3 v 6

But Christ, as the Son, is in charge of God's entire house. And we are God's house, if we keep our courage and remain confident in our hope in Christ.

So, keep courage and remain confident in our hope in Christ. Jesus is God's gift to us and is the only way in which we can be reconciled (OR MADE RIGHT) with God. This is really important, because many people seek peace in this life but are looking in the wrong places.

We are all generally lost and without hope when we fail to address the issue of sin which keeps us separated from God and His promise of eternity with him. The only HOPE for mankind is Jesus if we want eternal peace. Sin has to be dealt with and paid for – we cannot go through life without seeing two things: The glory of God's creation – which although many have tried to create the illusion that it all happened by chance therefore denying God – and the consequences of sin all around us. This consequence is the mess we make when we leave God out. Sin is simply disobedience to God's care and love for us. Mankind wants to deny God's existence because then sin doesn't exist either!

However, when we stop, look, listen and think, then perhaps the evidence begins to be seen.

The writer to the Hebrew continues in verse 12 of chapter 3:

Hebrews 3 v 12-14

Be careful then, dear brothers and sisters. Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God. You must warn each other every day, while it is still “today,” so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God. For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ.

We are warned to not turn away from God, to warn each other of the dangers of losing our hope. Sin deceives and leads away from God and we have to be wary of its dangers every day, seeking to warn others whilst we still have time. I think the value of Stop, Look, Listen and think are principles we should employ every day.

STOP: Have you ever tried concentrating on one thing whilst doing another? We can never engage fully and the end result is often compromised. Do something now. Stop doing what you are doing and give yourself time to evaluate.

LOOK: Taking time to contemplate without distraction gives us the opportunity to concentrate and question the values we hold to and motivate us. Sometimes we need to ask whether they are really the values we should hold.

LISTEN: If we stop striving and take time to still ourselves, if we have stopped and are brave enough to look and question, then we are led to listen. We allow God's voice to interject into our lives and perhaps allow us to question.

THINK: *Philippians 4 verse 8-9 says:*

And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.

I pray as we take time to stop look and listen, that we will think on the things that will make a difference in our lives. The Green Cross Man, famously stated that we learnt the Green Cross Code because he couldn't be with us every time, we came to cross the road. I am thankful, that God does not leave us and gives The Holy Spirit to help us in our thinking and actions.

Stop, look, Listen and Think. You may be very glad that you did.



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