

Pause for reflection 16 October

2020

Morning Sun

Welcome to this week's reflection which finds me experiencing a range of emotions whilst engaging in some unusually deep contemplation.

I was listening to another Carole King CD as I continue my alphabetical journey across my CD shelves and came across the track entitled "Morning Sun" which certainly activated my emotional side!

So we are still on the letter "K" this week with Carole King providing the foundation for my "reflections."

One of the many articles I've been reading in the newspapers over the past few days was a study of the emotional and mental health impact of the various lockdown restrictions which we have all been subject to for well over 6 months now.

What struck me about the study and its findings was that the deleterious effects of lockdown and limitations on our freedoms are not restricted to any one particular age group or section of society. It seems that all ages are affected in one way or another, with the youngest children feeling the loss of friendships and missing seeing their Granny, through to teenagers who cannot socialise as much as they wish to. Then we have the "working -age" population affected by furlough, redundancy, working from home, home schooling etc etc., Finally we have the "elderly" who are suffering loneliness, travel restrictions, family visit restrictions, etc etc.

Almost all sections of society tell of mental health impacts such as stress, fear, depression, sadness, loneliness, lack of motivation and even in some cases a feeling of hopelessness and helplessness.

Truly it will take some time for all of society to recover from this awful pandemic!

Having read the article and then spent some time ruminating about it and its implications, I must admit to feeling a bit depressed and down. A feeling of "heaviness of mind" came over me and I did experience what I suppose was a "bout of depression." This rather took me by surprise as normally I am quite a cheery chap and can usually find humour in most situations. It was then that I found myself listening to some music, which I often do as a form of relaxation and "therapy."

Hence the choice of this week's track **"Morning Sun."**

The first line really hits you when you're feeling a wee bit down in the dumps...

"Sometimes I feel like I've been living much too long"

Then the song moves on to the line...

"I think I've lost the inner harmony that flows through me and my body and mind"

And then a further "downer" when we get to the lines.....

"I get burdened by the things I just don't understand"

And all the mountains left to climb"

At this point you may well be wondering why on earth I have selected such a “morose” track! I’ll explain after you’ve taken time out to read the full lyrics below.

"Morning Sun"

Sometimes I feel like I've been living
much too long
And I've wasted too much time
I think I've lost the inner harmony that
flows through me
And my body and mind

Like the shoreline that divides the sea
and sand
I'm a surface ever-changing
I get burdened by the things I just don't
understand
And all the mountains left to climb

But then the morning sun comes
shining through my window
And it's good to be alive
It's gonna be a golden day
Wings unfoldin' day
Green trees, blue sky

If I can only learn the lesson of the
seasons
Of a balance re-arranging
Though they may not always come just
when I want them to
Still they come and keep me high

And the morning sun comes shining
through my window
And it's good to be alive
It's gonna be a golden day
Wings unfoldin' day
Green trees, blue sky

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Hopefully now, having read the lyrics, you are able to better understand why I have chosen this track. Although it starts “in the darkness” it then lightens up with some wonderful imagery and uplifting words.

Verse 3 in particular really lifts the gloom when you are feeling a bit depressed..

“But then the morning sun comes shining through my window

And it's good to be alive”

As I write this I am sitting at the desk in front of a window and the sun is indeed shining through and lifting the gloom both in terms of my physical surroundings and the inner gloom in my emotions.

As we move further into October and become even more aware of the change in temperature and the reducing daylight hours, we are also reminded of the predictability of the seasons.

I know that we are definitely in Autumn as I have finally banished my shorts to the top shelf of the wardrobe , not to be seen again until March/April next year. So its back into long trousers and warm jumpers but that in itself is not a reason to be gloomy or feel down.

Indeed as I look out and see the beauty of the trees turning from their summer splendour into the glorious autumnal changes of hue, I appreciate the sentiments expressed in verse 4.

“If I can only learn the lesson of the seasons of a balance re-arranging”

I also find genuine reassurance in the final lines of verse 4 where we read

*“Though they may not always come just when I want them to
Still they come and keep me high”*

So what does this song give me?

It gives me hope, it gives me reassurance, it gives me a renewed motivation to “get up and go,” it gives me a reminder that, as someone once said,

“Remember the sun is always there, it’s just that sometimes the clouds hide it from view temporarily.”

I’ve also become aware of a wee book which is well worth a read if you are feeling a bit down or finding life somewhat challenging. The book is entitled “It’s ok not to be ok” by Claire Chamberlain, and is subtitled , “Good advice and kind words for positive mental well-being.”

We all feel a bit fed up now and again. That’s natural and OK. But we should also never forget that , as Christians, we are surrounded by the ever-present love of our Lord Jesus and that through our faith we can be assured that we are never alone.

Just before I select my Bible Readings for this week, let me offer you a couple of quotes from this fine wee book.

- *“hope shines brightest in the darkest of moments”*
- *“Do one small thing today that makes you happy.”*

- *“Lighten up on yourself. No one is perfect. Gently accept your humanness”*

I hope you found something both in the Carole King track and in the few quotations from the wee book.

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Now to this week’s Bible readings.

1 Peter Ch 5 from v5

And all of you must put on the apron of humility, to serve one another; for the scripture says, "God resists the proud, but shows favour to the humble."

6 Humble yourselves, then, under God's mighty hand, so that he will lift you up in his own good time.

7 Leave all your worries with him, because he cares for you.

8 Be alert, be on watch! Your enemy, the Devil, roams around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.

9 Be firm in your faith and resist him, because you know that other believers in all the world are going through the same kind of sufferings.

10 But after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who calls you to share his eternal glory in union with Christ, will himself perfect you and give you firmness, strength, and a sure foundation.

11 To him be the power forever! Amen.

And

1 Timothy Ch 6 from v11

Strive for righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness.

12 Run your best in the race of faith,
and win eternal life for yourself; for it
was to this life that God called you when
you firmly professed your faith before
many witnesses.

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**My chosen hymn this week is Hymn
517 : Fight the good fight.**

1 Fight the good fight with all thy might;

Christ is thy strength, and Christ thy
right:

lay hold on life, and it shall be

thy joy and crown eternally.

2 Run the straight race through God's
good grace,

lift up thine eyes, and seek his face;

life with its way before us lies,

Christ is the path, and Christ the prize.

3 Cast care aside; upon thy Guide

lean, and his mercy will provide;

lean, and the trusting soul shall prove,

Christ is its life and Christ its love.

4 Faint not, nor fear, his arms are near;

he changeth not, and thou art dear;

only believe, and thou shalt see

that Christ is all in all to thee.

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Let us pray

Dear Lord, we bring our prayers to you
this day full in the knowledge that we
are weak at times, that we are sad and
depressed at times and that,
occasionally, we lose faith.

Help us today to remember your many
promises to us and to remember that,
like the seasons, you are dependable
and will always come around to us.

We pray for all who are struggling
emotionally at this time. Be with them ,
support them, guide them, and
reassure them.

Help us all to look up, to look through
the windows of life and to fully
appreciate the many golden days
ahead of us .

We pray for all in our own immediate
families and all in our wider church
family. Be with them all each and every
day.

Amen

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I trust that if and when you next feel a
wee bit fed up, that you can re-read
"Morning Sun" and/or read some of the
wee book "Its ok not to be ok" and
therein find some solace and
motivation.

In the meantime, keep safe, keep warm
and be kind to yourself and others.

Alistair Session Clerk B/P 16/10/2020