

# Weekly Newsletter

## 26<sup>th</sup> May 2026



Holyrood  
Church

### Reflection: Cultural Lenses and the Prodigal Son

By Hazel Sorsamo (one of our missionaries serving with Wycliffe in Finland)

The Parable of the Prodigal Son is a familiar story (if it isn't, you can read it in Luke 15). With this parable in mind, let me begin with a simple question: why did the younger son fall on hard times?

Was it his reckless lifestyle – the choices he made in a distant land?

Was it his decision to leave his family and community?

Was it the terrible famine?

Or the lack of a safety net when everything fell apart?

The passage itself doesn't single out one reason. Instead, it seems to hold all these together. And yet, as readers, we might only recall one explanation. I must admit, when I was asked this question, I completely forgot that the famine was part of the text at all.

Why is that?

The way we read Scripture is shaped by who we are and what we bring to it - our culture, values, and lived experience. What stands out to us often reflects what we believe matters most.

If a strong sense of personal responsibility is important to us, we may focus on the son's bad choices. If relationships and belonging are central for us, we may notice that he left his family and community. If we think more in terms of provision and security, the famine and lack of hospitality stand out.

These perspectives are sometimes described as cultural lenses. Like a pair of glasses - or even an accent - it is easy to forget we have them at all.

All of us experience guilt, shame, and fear at different times. We can all identify with wanting to do what is right, honourable, and life-giving. But often one of these dimensions shapes us more deeply than the others. It influences what we want, what we see as most wrong, and what we most long to be restored from. It shapes how we hear the good news of the gospel. Do we come guilty, seeking forgiveness; as shamed, longing for welcome and restoration; or frightened looking for refuge and strength?

I have been reminded of this recently by a friend of mine. We often pray together, and she begins with a long, passionate declaration: "Lion of Judah, Almighty God, our Great High Priest, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords..."

At first, I found it a bit unsettling. It felt unfamiliar to me, even overwhelming. But I think I have begun to understand. For her, this is where she needs to begin – with God in His strength and authority. Before anything else, she prays, reminding herself that He is greater than anything she faces.





My brief, “Father in Heaven” or “Father Almighty” doesn’t do that in quite the same way.

Christ is, of course, all of this. We have all fallen short and He graciously meets us in our need – He forgives us, restores us, welcomes us home and is strong for us.

As we welcome people from different backgrounds into our church, we may start to notice some of these differences more. At times, it can make us pause, even feel a little uncomfortable. But it can be a gift too. We notice our own lenses, and glimpse through someone else’s. And in doing so, we come to know more of who God is.

Coming back to the Parable of the Prodigal Son, we listen again with fresh ears. We notice the son’s guilt, but also his longing to belong. We notice the Father’s forgiveness, but also the restoration of honour (the robe, the ring, the feast). We notice the party, but also the safety of being welcomed in.

## Picnic in the Park – this Sunday

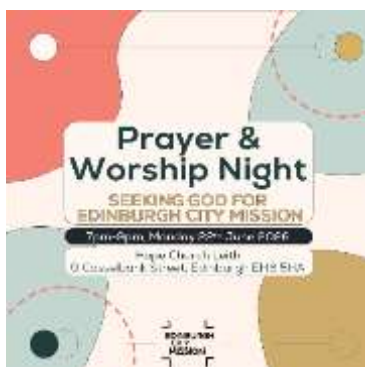
We’re hoping to have a picnic in the park together **this Sunday** (31<sup>st</sup>) after the morning service. Bring your picnic with you and something to sit on. Tea, coffee and cold drinks will be provided. We’ll put up the volleyball net and enjoy an afternoon together. It will be weather dependent and we can eat in the church if it rains!

## Meal and Prayer Meeting – Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June

Next Wednesday (3<sup>rd</sup> June) we’ll be having a meal together in the church before the prayer meeting. Come from 5.45pm, food will be served at 6pm and we’ll pray together from 7-8pm.

We’re looking forward to Derek and Catriona Lamont from Hope Church Leith joining us and giving an update on the work there.

## Edinburgh City Mission – Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June



From Naomi Amour and the Edinburgh City Mission Team – ‘For 194 years, Edinburgh City Mission has shared the hope of Jesus across our city.

As we walk through a challenging season, we are gathering with the body of Christ from across Edinburgh for a night of thanksgiving, prayer and worship. Please join us on **Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June from 7-9pm** at Hope Church Leith (9 Casselbank Street, Edinburgh)’





## Faith Mission Convention 2026

The 2026 Edinburgh Convention, will be held from **Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> – Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> July**. There will be a full programme of teaching along with activities for children, teens and young adults.

Gerald White (Hope Church Bingham) is leading the 16-25s Rejuvenate programme and further information is available [here](#).



**DEREK MAXWELL**  
General Director of  
Slavic Gospel Association



**JIM LYONS**  
Pastor of Coleraine  
Congregational Church

THE FAITH MISSION  
BIBLE COLLEGE  
EDINBURGH, EH7 8QG  
[www.faithmission.org/edinburgh](http://www.faithmission.org/edinburgh)

**MINISTRY**  
Morning Sessions, Seminar,  
and Evening Challenge

**CRECHE**

During the Morning  
Session and Seminar

**KID'S ZONE**

Alongside main events  
both morning and evening

**INVIGORATE**

Events Friday and Saturday  
morning for 12-15 years

**REJUVENATE**

Events for 16-25s

**ACCOMMODATION**

Options in the Bible  
College or Pollock Halls



Do pray for all the speakers. Jim Lyons and Derek Maxwell are doing the main Bible teaching. Jim is the pastor of Coleraine Congregational Church, and Derek is the UK Director of Slavic Gospel Association. David Nixon (Carrubbers) will also speaking over the weekend. Save the dates and come along!

## Church Calendar

This week for your info and prayers:

- Wednesday: Home groups. Contact [liz@holyroodchurch.org](mailto:liz@holyroodchurch.org) for more details.
- Thursday: Women's Bible Studies from 10.30 – 11.30am in the church
- Sunday:
  - Worship Service at 10.30am – Joe Barnard preaching (live streamed)
  - Evening Service at 6pm – Josh Strike preaching
- Monday: Baby and Toddler Group from 10am – 11.30am

