



Well, that was February. Einstein was right about relativity but in my simpler definition, it is simply that time passes more quickly with increasing age. Ask anyone. So, how have things being going?

Together we worship Jesus and communicate
his love in all we do and say.

Feeding: since 10 January 2016, I have had the joy of preparing for and delivering 8 sessions of teaching and preaching to TCF (and two to New Craig Community Church in Motherwell). I also met the YF for a Q&A session and I loved that. However, I am

reminded that teaching and preaching is very much a shared responsibility and, for instance, those who were at the weekend in Faskally were given much food for thought by Alasdair Fyfe who was so engaging and challenging in the teaching from Romans 8 on the Transformative Power of the Holy Spirit.

As we have been making our way through James and 1 Corinthians, we have had much to challenge our personal behaviour (tongues, partiality, works) as well as our corporate loyalty (division, party spirit, servant-heartedness). One of the areas that comes up in both Epistles is the issue of wisdom. Job 12:12 says 'Wisdom is with the aged, and understanding in length of days.' So thank you Lottie Gow, Jean Kerr, Mary McIntyre and others who have 'length of days' - I love visiting you - and receiving your wisdom. But the text that means so much more to me now is Psalm 37: 30 'The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom...' This exemplifies what we have seen from James 3:13-18 - that wisdom is about conduct and not knowledge! The wise and the righteous are synonymous.

It is also true of learning - that conduct and not knowledge is most important - and I would like to undertake a mini survey in mid-April on the learning that has gone on from our time in these epistles. I hope you will help me as I ask the question 'what has changed in my life as a consequence of the teaching from James'? The survey will be anonymous of course but it is intended to help us focus on personal learning and development. Thank you in advance.

Family: it has been enlightening and encouraging to conduct around 35 visits so far to the TCF Family. Some have been with two or three individuals meeting together and others have been with couples or families. Some have been in the Manna House (my Loyalty Card for coffees is well stamped) or in homes. Usually there is a short reading and a prayer at each visit as well as an exchange of personal information. As the visits proceed (and I don't know yet how regularly I will be able to make them) I would like to share more on each one's spiritual life. Sometimes, there is a real grace encounter like when I was visiting with an older sister and when I read the encouragement from Psalm 91:1,2 this sister let me see the inside of her bible where her late husband had written those very verses. We felt the Lord's Presence as we gave Him thanks. The number of visits doesn't include repeat sessions or the meals!

Following: one very exciting development is that the elders approved the visit of Mark Stirling to the Leaders Breakfast event planned for 23 April 2016. The focus of the workshops by Mark will be on 'disciple-making leaders'. We know that leadership is undertaken by many in TCF - in particular ministries and practical work - and it is not the preserve of Elders. Whatever we are engaged in, our focus should be on 'making disciples who make disciples who make disciples' and we shall see how this is applicable to us all as we live for the Lord Jesus in our own discipleship generation. Please pray for that event that it may help us all to renew our primary focus. The developing plan for the church over the next five years also has 'following' as a key aim: 'Help everyone at TCF to follow Christ as a disciple' and we are thinking about what that means - though we know that the scriptures feature prominently in that task and we have got a five year framework in development for teaching the scope of scriptures. There will be flexibility built in so that we can react to situations too but the Teaching Team under Steve Braithwaite will monitor progress against the framework. Two years, 2016 and 2017, will be published soon.

One final quote for us to mull over is this one: *Be more concerned with your character than your reputation, because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are.*

Jim

Thank you for...

your support and prayer ...

and coffee!