

REFLECTION – 9 October 2016

(Readings: Proverbs 4:20-27; 2 Timothy 2:20-21)

Pen or Pencil? Does it matter?

Not really. What matters is what we find inside the pen or pencil. It is the ink that makes the pen and the lead that makes the pencil. If you write with a pen, it is not erasable while, when you write with a pencil, you can!

The same is true about you and me. God is telling us this morning through two different passages, from two different settings, that we need to focus on our relationship with Him. If we rely and trust in Him, He will guide and help us through life. In and through Jesus Christ, God showed us His forgiving love and gave us the gift to love unconditionally, as well. He gave us the gift of His Holy Spirit to assure us that we are never ever alone. In and through faith alone we know that - through the salvation and resurrection of Jesus Christ - we belong to God in life and death.

The apostle Paul once said that we are clay pots with a treasure hidden on the inside. He was referring to the treasure of having faith, hope and love.

Our faith in the salvation of Jesus Christ must direct everything we do, say and think in life.

God has given you and me a book with blank pages. Every day we are writing in that book our life stories. And the way we live, the way we make our choices in life will determine the outcome of our stories. We also have a choice to write it with a pen or a pencil.

If we have faith in God, we will write our stories with love, forgiveness, humility and kindness...and we will not judge others for their different stories, or stories that do not make sense to us.

Life is very short and we have only ONE change to make sure our life stories are full of faith, hope and love in God because, whether we like it or not, one day, our children and their children will read our life stories.

When I was called to Kirknewton and East Calder it was a chapter in the big book of my life, a chapter that I now need to close. I hope that I have written it with a pen so that what God has done through me will live on

and help His servant whom He will call, to continue where my chapter is ending, in the history of this Parish. If you read this chapter, you will see all the happy moments we shared together. You will also read how, in the challenging times, God sent “angels” to protect and guide me. I will always summarise this chapter in my life as a minister in a “Time of BIG change”. You have accepted me and taken me into your hearts. You – the members of this congregation, and the wider Parish, have opened your hearts, houses and wallets. You have helped us, as a family, to settle in a village in a time of big change after immigrating from South Africa. You have shaped and educated me in the Scottish ways. I hope that my children will read and grasp the love I have received from the beloved flock whom I served and the love I have for all, in my heart.

I have only one last message: write your life story of faith, hope and love with a **pen**. Do not be afraid and trust God. You do not have to use a pencil out of fear, so that you can erase things later. He already erased everything that stood between you and Him. He did it for all of us despite ourselves.

Amen