

November 2025

Dear Friends,

About 5 or 6 years ago, Gillian and myself, along with our daughter and 7 year old grand daughter set out to climb Coniston Old Man. The walk is helpful in that there is a car park a third of the way up, so we climbed the first 800 feet or so in the car!

Setting off we followed the Walna Scar Path around the mountain, an easily visible track, we followed it for a mile or two, roughly on the level, then the climb began. We turned right and started to climb towards the top. That was some climb - long and steep. However, we took our time noting various points of interest as we walked, keeping ourselves occupied.

We neared the summit but in order to get to our destination, we faced a descent of a couple of hundred feet and then a steep climb up again. Eventually, we arrived at the top.

The views were incredible! To the south, Morecambe bay, to the west, the Irish sea glinted in the sunshine; to the north, we drank in the majesty of the fells, and to the west, peered down to Coniston village and the lake itself. Then it was time to set off down again. We descended through the Copper mines, a steep, narrow path, but one which was stepped, though covered with shale and stones and a little tricky to navigate. The path was busy, the sun hot, and, to those with long toe nails, or tight boots, most uncomfortable. The younger members of our party ploughed on ahead as the older ones discovered that going downhill can sometimes be worse than climbing up.

Buoyed by the thought that we had seen an ice cream van in the car park as we set off, and that this would be our reward, we slowly and painfully, made our way down the hill. Finally following a grassy and pretty flat track back to the car and cool, refreshing Ice Cream

This walk is like a parable of our journey in the faith, either as individuals or as Churches. It's not coincidence it seems to me, that Jesus' final commands to his disciples in Matthew's gospel took place on a mountain (see Matthew 28:16-20).

There are easy paths we can follow that often don't take us anywhere; there are steep climbs and hard work to reach better things, but we walk these ways together, supporting and helping each other. On the way, we may see other routes we could take, but we need to be sure we follow the one true path.

It may take us up and down, through highs and lows, but eventually, we do reach the destination. From here, we can see wonderful things, but the path doesn't end there. We go on, and go down, and the way can be hard and painful, but we have two promises: firstly that Jesus will be with us always to the end of the age and secondly that there is a glorious end waiting for us, way more than ice creamy treats - the promise of paradise.

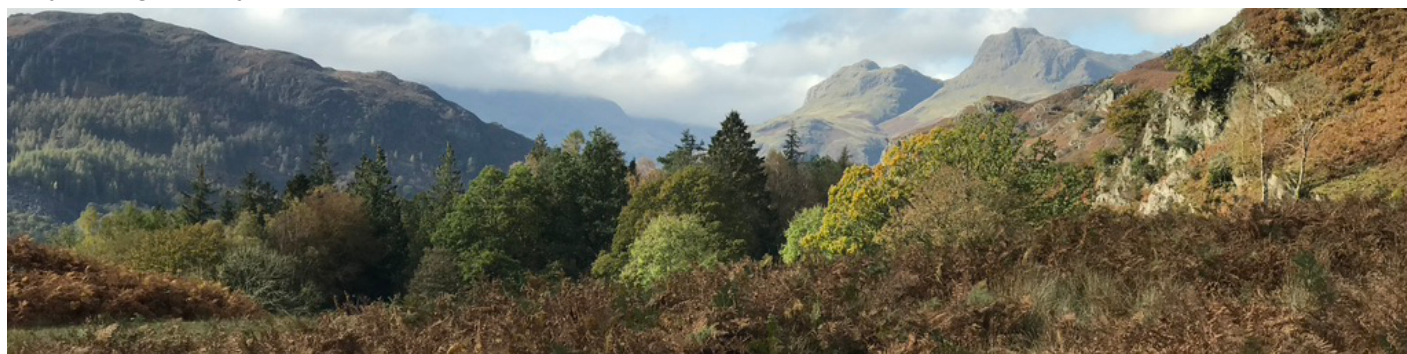
May God go with you, *Blessings, Rev Graham.*

**Hills of the North,
rejoice, river and
mountain-spring,
hark to the advent voice;
valley and lowland, sing.
Christ comes in
righteousness and love,
he brings salvation from
above.**

**Lands of the East, arise,
he is your brightest
morn, greet him with
joyous eyes, praise shall
his path adorn:
your seers have longed
to know their Lord;
to you he comes, the
final word.**

**Shout, as you journey
home, songs be in every
mouth, lo, from the North
they come, from East
and West and South:
in Jesus all shall find
their rest, in him the
universe be blest.**

*Charles Earnest Oakley
1832- 1865*



Lectionary Reflections from *Graham Thomas*

November 2nd 2025

Luke 19:1-10

2 Thessalonians 1:1-4, 11-12

Our God gives you everything you need, makes you everything you're to be. (2 Thess. 1:2 Message)

Luke continues to tell us of people coming to Jesus who were considered outsiders. In my last reflections, I mentioned "Vagabonds" a song by Stuart Townend, please listen to it if you can.

All may come to Jesus, yet now, as in Jesus' time, religious and pious people complain that they are the wrong type of people. The Greek word for complain, occurs twice in Luke, here and 15:2 before the parables of the "Lost". I have a book that used to belong to Revd Mike Smith. In the earlier passage from Luke he has annotated the margin "Grumblers".

Zacchaeus finds salvation, and returns with interest all that he has cheated people out of. How would you feel if you had been a "grumbler"? Our chairman, Revd Leslie Newton, recently said, "Let's make the main thing be the main thing". Our message, our Gospel, our mission, is to show people Jesus, **everyone**, no one is excluded. Don't grumble, rejoice, the lost has been found.

November 9th

Luke 20: 27-38

2 Thessalonians 2: 1-5, 13-17

Good friends—so loved by God! God picked you out as his from the very start. (2 Thess. 2:13)

The Sadducees were a group of the Jewish elite, whose influence was with the powerful and the rich. The Pharisees were more in tune with the vast majority of the Jewish community. Yet both are seen as the target of Jesus teaching. They should know better, but are more concerned with their own status and influence. It's not who we are or what we do, that is important, it is our faith in God

Here the Sadducees, who don't believe in resurrection, are showing how absurd they think it is. They use a clause in the Torah (Jewish Law) that is there to provide for a widowed woman, so that she is not disadvantaged by the untimely death of her husband. The purpose of the law was compassion. Jesus says there is a distinction between this world and the world of the hereafter. In the afterlife we are neither married or given in marriage, we are changed into children of God. What is important is that God is a living God, both here and in the hereafter.

This living God, loved us and chose us, so that the living, resurrected Jesus, could live in us. It is by grace that we are saved.



IT'S LIKE JESUS
IS THE **BEST** AND
HIGHEST BEING
IMAGINABLE!

HE HAS GREATER
AUTHORITY THAN YOU
CAN IMAGINE.

AND THEN HE
OFFERS HIS LIFE
FOR OURS.

UNIMAGINABLE!



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COLOSSIANS 1:11-20

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November 16th

Luke 21:5-19

2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

We showed you how to pull your weight when we were with you, so get on with it. (2 Thess. 3:8)

By the time Luke writes his Gospel (about 80AD) this apocalypse has happened - the Temple is destroyed and Jerusalem a ruined city. What we need to see here is that the people were admiring what man had made. It was not the architecture or the beauty of it, that Jesus highlights. It was the fact that it had become the focus of the nation's identity and its religious fervour, they had forgotten God.

If you read your newspapers and hear the news, this is the moment in time we are living in. Sensible people are starting to say there is a risk of war. But that's not the point that Jesus is making, he is asking us to choose to follow Him and put our trust in Him. He makes us a promise here, **every detail of your body and soul - even the hairs of your head! - are in my care.** He tells us what is required of us, **that we stay with it till the end.** Take your belief that one step beyond, to faith, be faithful to your commitment to God's grace and love.

November 23rd

Luke 23:33-43

Colossians 1:11-20

All the broken and dislocated pieces of the universe—people and things, animals and atoms—get properly fixed and fit together in vibrant harmonies, all because of his death, his blood that poured down from the cross. (Col. 1:20)

Jesus in his agony on the cross says **Father, forgive them; they don't know what they're doing.** He is ridiculed by the religious leaders, his critics. They divide his earthly possessions, his clothes. They mock him, **He saved others but cannot save himself, Messiah, ha! Chosen one, ha!** The soldiers taunt him **you're King of the Jews! Save yourself!** Even one of the men hanging with him, questions all that he has tried to do.

The other, the only person there to recognise his innocence and that he is God's chosen one. He asks Jesus to **remember me when you enter your kingdom.** This is the power of the cross, to know God's forgiveness and to recognise Jesus as saviour and Lord. **Today you will join me in paradise.**

November 30th

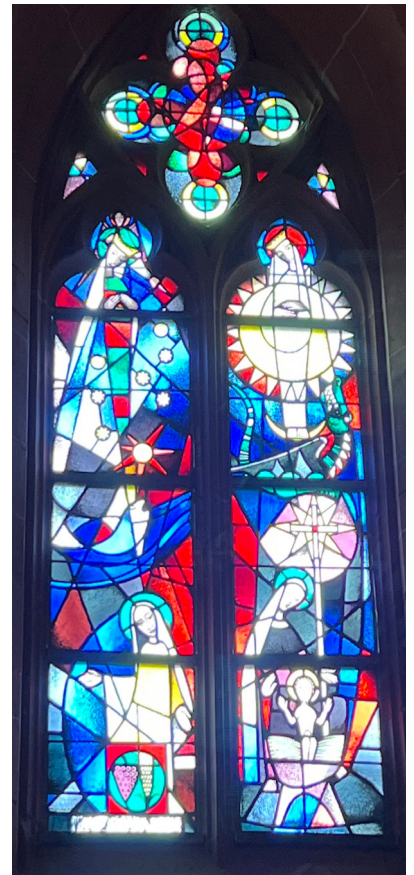
Matthew 24:36-44

Romans 13:11-14

Dress yourselves in Christ, and be up and about! (Romans 13:14)

My whole life has been under the spectre of "the end of times". From childhood to young adult, the mutually assured destruction of atomic war against Communism. Raising my children in the uncertain world of terror attacks and the loss of the ozone layer. My middle years, climate change and the conspicuous consumption of capitalism. Now lack of faith in anything, as both Communism and Capitalism have failed. The uncertain future with the rise, again, of the far right.

Yet my faith in God has remained consistent, I can say Jesus has walked with me the whole time, even those times when I wanted to do my own thing. Last week's reflection told us of the power of the Cross. This week we think about the hope of Advent, God is with us. That one certainty puts all of life's other uncertainties in context. For me this passage in Matthew tells me to live out my life in the fullness of God's grace. To be ready for what ever happens. Easy words to write, but hard to live out. Paul helps us here, **dawn is about to break. Be up and awake to what God is doing! God is putting the finishing touches on the salvation work he began when we first believed.** (Romans 13:12)



Methodist leaders have welcomed the appointment of Bishop Sarah Mullally as the new Archbishop of Canterbury.

"We warmly welcome the news of Bishop Sarah Mullally's appointment as Archbishop of Canterbury. We pray God's blessing upon her for this profoundly important ministry. May God guide Archbishop Sarah in her leadership within our public life, within the Church of England and among the worldwide Anglican Communion. The Methodist Church and the Church of England are covenanted partners: in local communities across the country Methodists and Anglicans are growing together in responding to the gospel of God's love in Christ, enriching one another's discipleship, and sharing in worship and mission.

"As church leaders, we look forward to walking alongside Archbishop Mullally in that same spirit of partnership in the coming years. Our present age demands a confident and united witness by the Church, to the love and grace of God that can mend divisions and overcome the fears of our world. We are encouraged by Bishop Sarah's clear commitment to making the Church a safe space for all, where all are welcome and can thrive. We will keep Bishop Sarah and her family in our prayers as she takes up this significant and demanding global role."

The Revd Richard Andrew, President of the Methodist Conference • Mr Matt Forsyth, Vice-President of the Methodist Conference • The Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler, Secretary of the Methodist Conference.



The President of the Methodist Conference Revd Richard Andrew called in to Pickering recently to visit his friend Edith who has known him since he was a teenager in a youth fellowship. That was during the time that Edith and her late husband Rev Frank Bramhall were stationed at Northallerton. Revd Richard arrived in time to meet some members of the Wednesday morning Bible fellowship shown in the picture left.

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