



# SEASON OF CREATION

SEPTEMBER 1- OCTOBER 4

## SERMON NOTES WEEK 1

ECS Staff

**Let love be genuine/ the Devil's "business as usual".  
Romans 12:9-21 & Matthew 16:21-28**

Genuine love, which wishes the best for all, must coexist with a sense of realism, when there is bad news to share, or a 'cross' to be faced. Genuine love differs from wishful thinking, which might temporarily comfort those not at the sharp end, but does no more than kick cans a few inches down the road.

We note the importance to Jesus of the support of his closest friends and followers. And how important that they were fully and clearly informed about Cross. ... though then the Resurrection.

What motivates us to withhold truths about the impact on sisters and brothers in Christ elsewhere in Scotland or the world?

But we are Church: gathered around the words and actions of Christ. And in this fellowship, the scariest decisions are not something we should be abandoned to. No congregation on Earth will evade or postpone the spiritual and practical challenges of the Nature and Climate crises in our

lifetimes. To **attempt** to do so - for whatever 'kind' reasons, risks the rebuke Peter received.

What are your best (or worst) experiences of the loving sharing of "bad" news? When my wife was diagnosed with serious illness, the surgeon began with the words "Would you like a cup of tea? They didn't evade the task in hand or the urgency of action, because things had reached a stage of no return, with no painless options, but both better and worse choices.

Colleagues in preaching have said they don't dare raise with farmers the clear global imperative that we eat *less* meat, or speak out in a locality where oil and gas - or the prospect of a new coal mine - dangle the temporary temptation of jobs. Even though these things are now demonstrably at the cost of others. Local circumstances genuinely differ - e.g transport of goods and disposal of waste - in our island communities, but these responsibilities need to be shared with the **whole** nation. Transition is a must, but transition must be just - otherwise the sheer unfairness will fuel 'satanic' delay and loss of momentum.

If not in church, then where else are we going to find the spiritual support and encouragement to face what does lie ahead, in a time when so many tipping points pass, and the rise in sea levels is already 'locked in' during our lifetimes?

Preachers - look to the solidarity of a movement like EcoCongregation Scotland.

Congregations: remember to encourage your preachers to tell the truth we need to hear, rather than whatever encourages 'the devil's business - as usual'.

Some might be squeamish about the name 'Satan'. Get over it. Forget horns, pitchforks and the smell of sulphur. We're talking here about the opposition to the healing intent of God, when 'business as usual' is killing the balance of life on Earth. Is Peter 'evil'? Hardly, as he seems to be trying to be a friend to Jesus. But his words, undermining resolve, sowing, potentially, the seed of doubt in the need for radical change, are 'satanic' in a technical sense.

The fellowship of Christ expressed in local and grassroots churches must retain the calling to offer 'sanctuary' - to be a place of the Good News where we come to be refreshed.

It's a valid criticism of some less than thoughtful environmental preaching that it offers only 'doom and gloom. But hope, with faith and love, is a choice and a gift of churches, who find joy in engagement. Where truth is told in love.

We do congregations no favours by allowing that the Nature and Climate crises are 'opinion', nor that they can be 'fixed'".

'Let love be genuine' - who will disagree? But do we have the courage, in Christ, for such love?

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