



PLAINS PRESBYTERIAN

29TH NOVEMBER 2020



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Pre-empting Aspirational Regret

My interest in trail running led me to understand a term I had been unfamiliar with. It is 'aspirational regret'. I came across it when I watched a documentary about a guy who is without a doubt the most accomplished trail runner of our generation. His feats have been truly remarkable. When he discovered at a young age that he had a knack for this sport, he set himself the goal of winning all the big, prestigious races in the world. This was meant to be a life-long pursuit, but he reached his goal in his early twenties. At that point something interesting happened. In the middle of a race (which he was winning), he suddenly stopped. His energy left him, and he fell into a severe depression. Psychologists say this was because of 'aspirational regret'. This occurs when someone finally accomplishes their goals, and they find that they have nothing left to live for. People aim for the top of the mountain, but, when they get there, they find that it gives them nothing. Life becomes meaningless.

We may not have athletic ambitions like this man. But could we too, be chasing dreams which will leave us empty in the end? It could be fame, wealth, or the pursuit of lusts. In that case, we find that all we're doing is feeding our selfish nature, which is never satisfied, but only increases in hunger when it is fed. Or perhaps we have loftier goals of accomplishing great things for the sake of humanity. That is great, but there is still the question of what drives us. What are we looking to find? When we get to where we have always wanted to be, will we really feel fulfilled? I think that the best way to ensure we never regret pursuing our life's goals is by pursuing goals which are anchored in eternity, rather than on earth. As I have been reading more about the lives of those who have gone before us, I am learning that, in ages gone by, Christians placed a much greater emphasis on becoming more like Christ than we do in our generation. Becoming more like Jesus, being transformed into His image, surely is a goal worth pursuing!

Changing sinners to become more like Himself is one of God's great aims in salvation. And the beauty of it is that, while we walk the earth, we are never truly done. The Apostle Paul said, 'Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus' (Philippians 3:12-14). It's brilliant to have a lifegoal that is anchored in eternity. It provides direction and meaning to every day of our earthly lives. And we will never fully 'get there' on earth and have this horrible depressing feeling called 'aspirational regret'. We keep being changed until the day we meet Jesus face to face. And I am certain that in heaven we won't regret any efforts we spent on earth in becoming more like Him, but we will be reaping eternal rewards in heaven.

- **Peter Horrobin** *Seeds of the Kingdom*

Hope Advent One (1 December)

I pick tea but cannot yet grow food
Rasu picks tea in Sri Lanka. She climbs the steep hills, plucking a few leaves from each bush to put in the sack around her head. It is hard work, and the pay is not good. She has to buy all the food for her family from the plantation store but she dreams of starting a small mushroom farm so she can improve their diet and earn money for school and medical costs. If only she could have a small patch of land to grow food and a living wage, her family would do better. We are hungry for hope.



Christian World Service [christmasappeal.org.nz](https://www.christianworldservice.org/)

Advent One.

We know the story of Christmas too well! We tell it to our children, grandchildren, we sing about it, we write about it; draw pictures about it; celebrate it. Yes, we use to do that, but in this modern world, less and less folk are interested. But the Christmas story can be found in the Gospels. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

We know that 2 people went on a long journey, Mary and Joseph, which involved a donkey. The hotels and Motels were full, but an inn keeper let them sleep in a cattle stall. A baby, called Jesus was born in an obscure Palestinian town called Bethlehem, Shepherds visited, leaving their sheep on a hillside. The Wisemen followed a star and it's also about a bad king who tried to kill the baby.

We know what happened to the baby in those humble circumstances. He grew up obedient to his parents, he did good deeds and said good things; a bad man crucified him but when some of his followers went to his tomb they found it empty and they believed that he had risen - and some days later they saw him, talked with him, ate with him.

We know this story of Christmas and what followed - in it there are no surprises for us. Yet everything about this man was unexpected and is STILL!

To ponder on; How do you feel about the last sentence?

And what difference does it make, anyway?

St. Andrew's Rakaia

Tuesday 1st December

10:30 am | Rakaia Fit Kids | with Miranda A time for friendship, fun, and support. Welcome to all pre-school children.

1:00 pm | Steady As You Go | Balance, strengthening and gentle exercises for senior folk's health and well-being.

IT'S CHRISTMAS

Come and Join us @ St Andrew's Church Hall Rakaia By the 2 big trees on the main road.

Friday 18th December at 4.30pm – 7:30pm

Craft Time for Children and Supporters. Baking Time for all Cooks. Cookie decorating. Choccy Chip Chompers. 6.00pm Free Community Meal for all, 6.45pm Christmas Music with the All Nations Band.

Welcome to ALL. A time of friendship and the Joy of Christmas

For information contact Dorothy or Miranda.

St. John's Methven

At 10:30 am this Sunday, 29th November at St. John's there will be a Plains Parish 'Café' Service.

"Stir Up' Sunday; featuring the meaning of the Christmas Cake/ Pudding. People involvement with readings, singing and baking. Morning tea and Christmas Cake. Welcome to all; Service to be led by the Worship Committee.

*Message from Joan Wright: We had a good, combined service at Staveley. Enjoyed the atmosphere worshipping together in their lovely church. Rev Jim Young led the Service reminding us that God sends a 'Thorn in the Flesh', such as Covid, to bring us nearer to Him.

		Sunday Services	
Nov. 29 th	10:30 am	St. John's Methven	Worship Teams; Parish Sunday
Dec. 6 th	10:30 am	St. John's Methven	Rev. Arii; Parish Service. Communion

PRAYER

Father, I am sorry if I have set goals for my life which in the end will prove to be empty and unfulfilling. Help me to set my sights on heaven. And until I get there, please help me to become more like Jesus every single day. Amen.

- **Peter Horrobin** *Seeds of the Kingdom*