

19th April 2025

Saturday

“Saturday’s child works hard for a living.”

E. Bray (Ed), from “Monday’s Child”, in ‘Traditions of Devonshire’ (1838)

When I was a small boy, Saturday was a “play day”, a day of fun and enjoyment, squeezed – all too briefly – between a week of school classes, and the restrictiveness of Presbyterian Sunday traditions. It was a day of endless playing outdoors, free from constraints, a day for me.

During my university years, Saturday was a day with mates, to an away match or a home game with the University Shinty Team, the travelling and the pub afterwards. With no lectures – and little time for study – it was a day of choices, to be with the people that mattered.

As a parish minister, Saturday was usually a working day. If there wasn’t a wedding to conduct in the afternoon, there was always sermon preparation, with regular evenings in the study, completing, tweaking, rehearsing, what was to be offered the following day.

In my hospice work, Saturday – and Sunday – was space from the pressures and stresses of end-of-life care, letting go, family time, sport on TV, shopping, visiting, relaxing and restoration. The Saturday part of my weekend felt like healing for me, so I could be fully engaged again with hurting people when the Monday came around.

And now, as I come to the Saturday of Holy Week, I’m realising that this day means every bit of this, and all jumbled up together. This is a day, free from the structure of the week that’s gone by; a day to wait, as the disciples did, with people of like mind; to work at our thoughts and try, as best we can, to prepare for what’s to come; to have space, to let go of the past and be hopeful for the future. Or – as I do now in retirement – to take it as it comes, not knowing, not planning, not deciding, just “being”.

However you use this Saturday, I hope it works for you, and I hope you can give some thought to why it works that way. Don’t rush on. Don’t see it as a “nothing day”. But do some work on what this Saturday stands for – maybe even some *hard* work, as in the quote above. For it’s a day that still matters, in between what was and what’s to come.

Is this Saturday just to be “got through”, or is it for some positive purpose? I’ll leave that to you, now that you’re Saturday’s child again.

A prayer for today

Generous God, thank you for this day. Whatever it contains, help me to use it well. Amen

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