

8<sup>th</sup> August 2025

## Mark

**“Aw, come on! Let me out, please! I need to make my mark!”**

As spoken by Hiccup: *Movie screenplay, “How to Train Your Dragon” (2010)*

The story behind the poem I shared with you yesterday arose from an important lesson I learned in my younger years.

I had a summer job when I was a student, repairing rural roads in the northwest of Scotland. We’d completed a stretch near a narrow bridge, and I was given the responsibility on a Friday of replacing the “Road Narrows” sign as a warning to the oncoming traffic. The sign was put up with great ceremony. I even got a round of applause. This would be my lasting memorial. I’d made my mark! I could tell my grandchildren, “I did that!” When we got back to the site after the weekend, the “Road Narrows” sign was lying in a ditch. It had been flattened by a lorry, because I’d put it too close to the edge of the road. Lasting memorial? No chance!

In close to sixty years of ministry, every church I’ve worked in is no longer a functioning Church of Scotland. So, if I’d ever wanted a lasting memorial, there would be no chance there either.

So what *does* last? Not the bricks and mortar of churches – or even carefully-placed road signs, it appears. A minister once suggested to me that ministry was like putting your finger in a bucket of water. While it’s in the water, it makes a difference. But take it out, and within moments you wouldn’t know it had been there. A bit depressing? But is there not truth in that image, that the difference we make is while we’re here, and that a lasting memorial isn’t what we should be looking for?

What lasts are the traces we leave in the lives of others: a word of comfort offered; a lesson taught; an example shown; a truth revealed; a reassurance extended; a life renewed by our compassion; hope created because of our commitment to justice and equity; a brokenness healed.

Making your mark? When love is shared, lives are changed. When God’s Love is mirrored in our actions, that’s memorial enough.

The things of time will soon decay and crumble into dust.

For transience can never offer substance we can trust.

If you want immortality, kiss the things of time goodbye,

And grasp what is eternal – then your love will never die.

### **A prayer for today**

*Living God, your Love is eternal. May my love last, and last, and last. Amen*