

**STAYING OPEN (VISION SUNDAY)**  
**Jeremiah 29:13 & Matthew 5:6**

**Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2016 9am & 11am**  
**Gold Hill**

*When you search for me, you will find me if you seek me  
with all your heart.*

**Jeremiah 29:13**

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness  
for they will be filled.*

**Matthew 5:6**

## **Introduction**

What do Kodak and BHS have in common?

Both are household names in the UK. Both were huge companies. Both went bankrupt. BHS went into receivership this year and Kodak went bankrupt in 2012.

Why did these companies fail?

- Financial failure
- Bad management
- Lack of strategy
- Misunderstanding the market

All of these are true. On the surface, neither Kodak nor BHS moved into the new market place well enough or fast enough. Kodak missed the digital revolution and BHS failed to update its stock, its image and its engagement in the online world.

But dig behind the collapses and you discover something more important. Both Kodak and BHS had people within the organisations who say the problems, predicted the issues and yet their voices were drowned out and the organisations did nothing.

Kodak were alerted to the rising opportunities and challenges of the emerging digital age two decades ago but failed to act. BHS knew about the changing market and needs of the British consumer fifteen years ago and failed to do anything. It was complacency in both firms that led to their ultimate failure.

***Forbes article, May 2012:***

*Everyone thinks of all this in terms of strategic decisions either avoided or made poorly. What no one seems to do is go back and ask: Why did Kodak make the poor strategic decisions they made? In 1993 they brought in from the outside a technology expert to be CEO. George Fisher was believed to be almost as good as Jack Welch or Lou Gerstner. Great CEO, people buried in the hierarchy who had all sorts of good ideas, and still poor strategic decisions. Why?*

*Answer: The organization overflowed with complacency. I saw it, maybe in the late 1980s. Kodak was failing to keep up even before the digital revolution when Fuji started doing a better job with the old technology, the roll-film business. With the complacency so rock-solid, and no one at the top even devoting their priorities toward turning that problem into a huge urgency around a huge opportunity, of course they went nowhere. Of course strategy sessions with the BIG CEO went nowhere. Of course all the people buried in the hierarchy who saw the oncoming problems and had ideas for solutions made no progress. Their bosses and peers ignored them.*

1. Kodak lost the culture of innovation and change.

- a. They lost the hunger for new ideas.
- b. They lost their sense of urgency.
2. Their success bred complacency
  - a. They didn't think they needed to stay fresh.
  - b. They sat back on their reputation.
  - c. They lost their hunger.

## **God has more for us**

God wants to meet with us today. He doesn't want us to leave this gather the same way as we came in. There is more for him to do in us and there is more for him to do through us. It seems to me that the questions are not whether God is able to meet with us or God is able to use us to make a difference in the world or whether God is able to minister into the situation that we face and give us courage or hope of faith or a new perspective. The question is whether we are willing to let him, whether we are open to Him, whether we have an expectancy in our hearts that God still wants to do something in us, for us and through us.

- The power of the word that we believe God has spoken to us

*When you search for me, you will find me if you seek me with all your heart.*

**Jeremiah 29:13**

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be filled.*

**Matthew 5:6**

God hasn't finished with us yet – but do we believe that enough to allow it to change to way we approach life, the world and our place in it?

*Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things, that you have not known.*

**Jeremiah 33:3**

## Websters' Definition of Complacency

A feeling of being satisfied with how things are and not wanting to try to make them better' a complacent feeling or condition.

### What breeds complacency?

The stories of our lives... (Jesus and the use of parables as he addressed complacency)

1. Success, comfort and pride (Kodak) –The sin of Israel. See **Deuteronomy 8:14-20**

*No not exalt yourself, forgetting the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of slavery, who led you through the great and terrible wilderness, an arid wasteland with poisonous snakes and scorpions. He made water flow for you from flint rock, and fed you in the wilderness with manna that your ancestors did not know, to humble you and to test you, and in the end to do you good. Do not say to yourself, 'My power and the might of my own hand have gotten me this wealth.' But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, so that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your ancestors, as he is doing today. If you forget the Lord your God and follow other gods to serve and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that you shall surely perish. Like the nations that the Lord is destroying before you, so shall you perish. because you would not obey the voice of the Lord.*

2. Greed and a sense of having made it (BHS) – see **Luke 12:19-21 – The parable of the wealthy barn owner**

*And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years: relax, eat drink and be merry. But God said to him, You fool! This very night your life will be demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be? So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich towards God*

### 3. Exhaustion and being badly prepared

The journalist, James Badcock, in his article in The Telegraph on the 8th June this year, told an interesting story under the title, "Sheep run loose in Spanish town after shepherd falls asleep."

1,300 sheep "had to be rounded up by police in the Spanish city of Huesca after their shepherd fell asleep." The article continued:

According to city authorities, the police were alerted to the presence of the extremely large flock attempting to negotiate the streets in the center of Huesca at around 4.30am on Tuesday when a local resident dialed Spain's 112 emergency number.

The dozing shepherd was meant to be keeping the animals in check outside the environs of the city while he waited for the clock to strike 7am, when he was due to guide the sheep northwards through Huesca towards Pyrenean uplands where his flock will graze during the hot summer months.

The police eventually found the herder, who was still peacefully slumbering. Together the embarrassed shepherd and police officers were eventually able to extract the sheep from the city and return them to their pastures.

See **Matthew 26:40,43,45**

*Then he came to his disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter; 'So could you not stay awake with me one hour?...Again he came and found them sleeping for their eyes were heavy...then he came to the disciples and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and taking your rest'*

See the parables in **Matthew 25** – the virgins (**vv1-13**); the talents (**vv14-30**)

**4. Disappointment with life or with God – see **John 11:32****

*Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died...*

**5. Wrong priorities – see **Luke 14:15-24** and the **Parable of the Great Banquet****

*Please accept my regrets (**vv18,19,20**)*

*I have bought a piece of land and I must go out and see it, please accept my regrets. Another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen and I am going to try them out, please accept my regrets, Another said, I have just been married and therefore cannot come.'*

Idols of Material possessions, career and family

I hate to see complacency prevail in our lives when it's so directly contrary to the teaching of Christ.

**Jimmy Carter**

**Illustration of the danger of complacency**

In the 2013 film, Gravity, Dr. Ryan Stone, played by Sandra Bullock, is a medical engineer on her first shuttle mission, with

veteran astronaut Matt Kowalsky, played by Georg Clooney. On a routine spacewalk, the shuttle is destroyed by a freak hail of space debris, leaving Stone and Kowalsky completely alone. According to one description of the film, "They are tethered to nothing but each other and spiraling out into the blackness. The deafening silence tells them they have lost any link to Earth ... and any chance for rescue. As fear turns to panic, every gulp of air eats away at what little oxygen is left. But the only way home may be to go further out into the terrifying expanse of space."

After the film's release, the German magazine *Der Spiegel* asked 69-year-old German astronaut Ulrich Walter to fact-check the film. Walter said that after becoming completely untethered, Sandra Bullock's character would have died. The interviewer commented, "That doesn't sound like a very nice way to go, drifting through nothingness in a spacesuit, waiting to die."

But Ulrich replied, "When you're slowly running out of oxygen, the same thing happens as does when you're in thin air at the top of a mountain: Everything seems funny. And as you're laughing about it, you slowly nod off. I experienced this phenomenon in an altitude chamber during my training as an astronaut. At some point, someone in the group starts cracking bad jokes ... A person who dies alone in space dies a cheerful death." In other words, your situation is hopeless, you're slowly dying, but you think it's funny.

## **Overcoming Complacency**

- 1.** Rejecting pride and realising that without God, we can do nothing. Our strength and hope comes from him.
- 2.** Rejecting the security we think our wealth gives us and acknowledging the danger of material wealth and comfort and that they are never enough.
- 3.** Rejecting the lie that we have to work at breakneck pace, acknowledging our lives can be out of kilter and we can be doing far too much or doing the wrong things.

4. Giving God our disappointment or confusion rather than holding onto it.
5. Acknowledging our priorities can be wrong and allowing them to be changed.

*See God as He has shown Himself to us...*

*See ourselves as God sees us...*

*See others as God sees them...*

Look up and not down...

Look around and not in...

Look forward and not back...

Look for ways in and now ways out...

May God replace cynicism with expectation,

May God replace complacency with yearning and holy dissatisfaction,

May God replace lethargy with passion,

May God replace criticism with affirmation,

May God replace despair with hope,

May God replace sadness with joy,

May God replace existence with abundant life,

May God replace fear with courageous faith

<sup>18</sup>“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, <sup>19</sup>to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

<sup>20</sup>And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.

<sup>21</sup>Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

**Luke 4**

*Read St Brendan’s Prayer (pp191-193 of Celtic Daily Prayer)*