

A LETTER FROM DR. SEAN LUCAS

October 15, 2020

My dear Friends:

Over the years, I have worked hard to develop a taste for poetry. I have to confess that poetry doesn't come easy to me—I much prefer a historical narrative from the recent past or a detective story from the Golden Age of Mystery. And yet, learning to read poetry and more to appreciate it is vital, I think, to the Christian life.

One of my favorite English poets is George Herbert (1593-1633). A priest in the Church of England, Herbert was an extremely significant public figure. While at Cambridge, he was the University's Public Orator. He would serve in parliament briefly for a couple of years but would leave political life for the church, serving as rector at St. Andrew's Church, Lower Bemerton, Salisbury.

Throughout Herbert's life, he wrote poetry, but it was especially when he became a pastor that his hand turned to verse. One of my favorite poems is called, "The Windows." In it, Herbert asks the question, "How can man preach thy eternal word?" After all, with all of our flaws and sins, our eccentricities and tics, we preachers all too often are "brittle crazy glass." We feel as though we fall short in preaching God's Word.

The wonder of God's grace is that he grants preachers a place in his temple "to be a window" through which God's story, with its light and glory, shines. Those preachers who pursue holiness, whose doctrine and life work together, are those whose ministry brings "a strong regard and awe." Without holiness, then the dirty window doesn't allow the light to shine—even though they might be pretty words, they only ring in the ear, not the conscience.

I've often reflected on this poem—which I encourage you to read for yourself—as I've thought about what ministry is all about. I feel the weakness that I bring to this task; I feel like brittle crazy glass. My prayer—and the prayer of all your pastors at IPC—is that God's color and light, his glory and grace, might shine through us and lead you to your faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.

In the grip of God's grace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sean".