

# WEEKLY SERMON

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## You can't beat a good drama

You can't beat a good drama. I have thoroughly enjoyed watching *Cleaning Up* (ITV, Netflix). It features one of my favourite actresses, Sheridan Smith, who came to fame in the Runcorn-based *Two Pints of Lager* and *a Packet of Crisps*.

In *Cleaning Up*, she brilliantly portrays the role of a cleaner, working in the City of London, trying to hold down a failing marriage with two girls, and an online gambling addiction. The drama subtly draws out its under-stated question: Who has the acceptable gambling addiction? Is it the “invisible” office cleaner playing on her phone app, or the hot shot stock-brokers, whose world she soon learns to act in (and convincingly so)? But you will need to watch *Cleaning Up* to find out more.

Gambling is a hidden addiction. Often ravaging the poorest in our communities. Betting shops have that alluring slogan: “When the fun stops, stop”. But I bet that is easier said than done!

“The thrill is linked to risk taking, which induces a natural high. The effect of this altered psychological state is similar to that of stimulant drugs” (The Priory Group website).

The adrenalin rush of risk taking is alluring. I used to do a job where there would be plenty of adrenalin when crisis hit, we had to work together, all hands-on deck, to sort a challenge “in the field”. I don't quite have the same adrenalin rush these days.

Jesus's brother, James, wrote one of the earliest letters in the New Testament. He has some wise advice for those who speculate about the future (James 4.13-15):

“Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.”

The Bible assures us that every day is written in His book before one came to be. Even in the chaos of the storms, Jesus is with us to assure us that darkness, chaos, fear, despair do not have the last word. When he appeared to his disciples altogether for the first time after his resurrection, he breathed on them and said, “Peace be with you... Receive the Holy Spirit” (John 20.21-22) Whatever you face today, may you know His breath of peace.

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