

Junior Church: Young Peoples' Group

## Some Thoughts for the Week Beginning 10<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Hello Everyone,

It was lovely to see some of you on Sunday afternoon for our Zoom session. But a bit frustrating too as I would have loved to talk to you in a bit more depth about how you are getting on, whether you are missing school and friends and how you are coping with the challenge of being confined to your homes now that we have passed day 50 of the lockdown.

A friend of mine is an expert on the natural world and has appeared on programmes such as Countryfile and Spring Watch. He set himself the challenge of writing a 'Corona Wildlife Diary' each day and posting it online. His world has shrunk to his small garden and over the period of lockdown in his diary he has described the birds, butterflies, damselflies, reptiles and other things that can be found there. Connecting with nature is part of his coping strategy. He finds comfort and reassurance in the fact that the natural world continues to function and weave its magic, even in lockdown. Judging from the reaction to what he has written, other people have also found it uplifting. [Take a look at his 'Corona Wildlife Diary here.](#)

They say a picture tells a thousand words and I was struck this week by a series of photographs on the BBC News web site with the title 'Children in Lockdown Across the World' [Here are the pictures.](#) I love looking at photographs and the best ones don't need any words. They leave the observer to consider for themselves the ideas, emotions and thinking behind the photograph. These are wonderful, uplifting images of children taken by UNICEF photographers of their own children whilst in lockdown. I'd love to know what you think of them and which ones stand out for you. They are very intimate portraits of the relationship between parent and child. Even the photographs of a child alone still suggest something special between the subject and a photographer behind the camera. They speak of love, patience, understanding and joy. My favorite is the photograph from France showing a mother at work on her computer and her daughter standing on the chair behind her, playing with her mother's hair. To me it speaks of the challenge that I know many parents have of trying to combine working from home with home schooling and caring.

There are some words with the images, but I recommend you first to look at the pictures without reading them. On one a parent says 'we hope they will remember this stressful time as one long holiday and that our old life will return'. A theme running through is the strategies for coping with the stresses of lockdown, the need to protect children from its effects and the pandemic itself. Looking at the children featured you wonder what the future holds for them and how the post-lockdown world will impact on their life chances.

And so to this week's Bible passage: [John's Gospel Chapter 14.1-14.](#) One of the wonderful things about reading the Bible is that it always has something to say about our current circumstances and this passage is no exception. The followers of Jesus were often confused and uncertain where Jesus was leading them and they struggled to understand what he was

saying to them. They worried about the future. There was a sense of foreboding about future events.

Then come the wonderfully comforting words of Jesus in verse 1 that gives the reading its flying start: 'Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God and trust in me'. These simple words, like the photographs we have been considering, carry huge power and weight. Jesus did not have the luxury of a photograph to illustrate his message, but he was pretty good at painting images to aid people's understanding of complex subjects.

These words are often used in funeral services. Jesus talks of the afterlife in terms of a mansion with many rooms and of the fuller life that awaits those whose earthly life is at an end: 'I am the way, and the truth and the life'. (verse 6).

So many people have lost their lives in this pandemic and their loved ones will feel many things, perhaps the same anxieties as the disciples felt. Jesus offers hope and reassurance. As I was walking around Earlswood Common on my daily exercise route the words of [Julian of Norwich](#) kept swirling around in my brain: '...but all shall be well and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well'. It is only natural to be anxious and concerned about our loved ones and ourselves, but when you are, remember the words of Jesus in John Chapter 14.

*Rodney*