

Junior Church: Young Peoples' Group

Some Thoughts for the Week Beginning 17th May 2020

Hello Everyone,

Welcome to another week in lockdown. There are signs of change, however, as we begin to emerge slowly and cautiously into another phase, rather like a creature emerging from hibernation at the end of winter. There is much talk about schools restarting and how this will work and which year groups will start the ball rolling. It's all a bit unsettling and creates a sense of uncertainty for all of you.

I don't know if you took much interest in the [VE Day celebrations](#). Watching the footage of 75 years ago of people gathering in huge numbers in town and cities across Britain to celebrate the end of WWII seemed a far cry from today's empty streets. Yet some of my neighbours did set up tables and chairs in their front gardens which made the day feel a bit more special than it might have been and allowed people living close to them the chance to talk from a safe distance.

Someone on the radio this week said 'community is important'. What I find remarkable about the last few weeks in the sense of togetherness despite the social isolation. We find ways of being together whilst apart. Radio 3 has a nationwide sing-a-long on Friday morning at 9.00am. There has been the Thursday evening clap, the video clinks with friends and family, a greater effort to ring people, and in the streets people seem nicer and more willing to wave or say hello. Some have made huge sacrifices as carers, doctors and nurses to make others know that they matter.

There is something within us that brings out these qualities of caring. Of course there is evil in this world and terrible things are done, such as the attack on an Afghan maternity hospital last week. We are at a loss to explain such things. But it seems to me that the vast majority of us are, at heart, drawn to help and support other people. What is it that makes us this way?

Last week we looked at John's Gospel Chapter 14 and saw how Jesus could, with simple but profound words, get alongside those who were in need to offer comfort and hope. This week we continue [the passage from verse 15 to verse 21](#). Jesus is again talking to his disciples patiently explaining some fundamental ideas of faith. Perhaps the most fundamental of all! He gets to the heart of the Gospel message. 'If you love me, you will obey my commands'. Love is the key. Where there is love everything else falls into place. Where love is absent, things fall apart.

To help us to achieve a world where love triumphs God sends us the Holy Spirit, a difficult concept for us to grasp. Paul helps us in his letter to the Galatians Chapter 5, verse 22. There he talks about the Holy Spirit in terms of how it changes us: to be more loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle and self-controlled. The Spirit works within us. I find the concept of the Holy Spirit difficult to grasp but I see it working when someone volunteers to get a neighbour's shopping, or the old

gentleman with long hair and beard gives me a cheery 'hello' when I'm out walking, or a person puts a card through my door or gives me a ring to check I'm ok. These are all an expression of the Holy Spirit working in the world. It is the expression of God in this world that is more powerful than any pandemic and more enduring too.

I don't know if you have seen the trailer that is on the TV that features several BBC new presenters and journalists. It begins with [Sophie Rayworth saying "One day I will tell you there are no new cases"](#). It then switches to other presenters in different locations each suggesting one thing that will happen one day when the pandemic is beaten: '...we will hug our loved ones again...'; '...take time to reflect and remember those lives lost...'. Finally the spotlight falls on newsreader Huw Edwards who says: 'Until then we will be here to help you understand what's happening every step of the way'.

It's a bit like that with God, I think. Life can have its ups and downs but God, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is there to help us understand what's happening every step of the way until His purposes reach fulfillment...one day.

Have a great week.

Rodney