

The Bigger Picture

Doing Church Differently

Week 28

25th October 2020

Word for the week

Words of wisdom from our Pastor, Mike....

We encounter all kinds of dangers. Obvious dangers can be easier to deal with than hidden dangers. I was walking recently through an unfamiliar delightful area dominated by mosses, ferns and trees. I kept getting stuck because the only ways forward involved negotiating what looked like various tricky descents.

Having wandered round this maze for some time, I eventually found an easy way down. Looking up, I then discovered to my horror, that there was a sheer rock drop of 130 feet close to where I had been thinking about clambering down. I also discovered that there once had been a quarry or two at this spot. There was also a disturbing shortage of warning signs!

As Christians, we tend to cling onto the hope that God will physically protect us. The truth is that he may or may not grant us that protection. There are things we can do in practical and spiritual terms to minimise personal dangers but, in this life, we can never eliminate danger altogether.

The apostle Paul knew all about danger: *I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers.* (2 Corinthians 11:26)

Did Paul ever change his lifestyle in the hope of a safer life? No way, because all he cared about was doing God's will. We mustn't go out of our way to seek danger but we must prayerfully and carefully deal with it when it comes along.



What should we pray?

Please pray for....

Sunday - Please pray about the service today. Pray for Helen as she leads worship and Mike as he preaches from Daniel 6. Pray that all involved would be blessed whether in the building or on zoom.

Monday - Pray about the 'circuit breaker' lockdown in Wales that infection rates would decrease.

Tuesday - Pray for those you know who are waiting for surgical procedures and others who are struggling with poor health.



Wednesday - Pray for the youth leaders in our church and the young people whom they lead every week that they all may follow Jesus in these perplexing times.

Thursday - Pray that Boris Johnson would receive wise advice from all his advisers. Pray that the government would make inspired decisions.

Friday - Pray for anyone you know who will be unemployed after the imminent end of the furlough scheme.

Saturday - Let us pray for ourselves and our families that we may try to please God in all the decisions we make and in all that we say and do.

Déjà vu

A word of encouragement from Mike...

Are you currently getting a feeling of déjà vu? More and more people are debating the merits of circuit breakers, lockdowns, etc. Isn't this exactly where we were back in March? Isn't it true that there are many instances in life where we seem to go round in circles? Sometimes, this can be dis-spiriting but other times it can be most reassuring.

There is a verse in the Bible which proclaims that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever! So, when we think about Jesus we may well use the phrase déjà vu, but oh how glorious.

In these perplexing times therefore, let us shout hallelujah that we can always rely on our Saviour to be there for us in times of danger and in times of safety.

SHARON'S SNIPPETS

Be Transformed

This year I have noticed the trees taking on their autumn colours. I don't remember seeing patches of yellow leaves on an otherwise green tree, or individual yellow leaves with green all around them. This detail normally passes me by as I rush from A to B, only really noticing the leaves when the whole tree has changed and the leaves are falling to the ground.

We often don't notice subtle changes, in other people or even ourselves, over time. Bad habits slip in, like the leaves changing on the tree, a little bit at a time without you noticing. I wonder if you have changed your habits over the last 7 months while our normal activities have been restricted. Have bad habits slipped in? Like the trees dropping their leaves, have you 'dropped' some spiritual 'habits'? Are you spending less time with God? Has your prayer life been eroded?

Sometimes it takes an outside influence to draw your attention to the changes.

As we move through this season, take the opportunity to examine your prayer life and take time to worship, *"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."* (Romans 12:2)

Nights draw in

The days have been gradually getting shorter but with the clocks going back this weekend we will suddenly notice it getting darker earlier. In the Bible the use of light and dark is used to mean good and evil, with or without God.

Jesus is the Light of the World and in John 11 he warns, *"During the day people can walk safely. They can see because they have the light of this world. But at night there is danger of stumbling because they have no light."* (John 11:9-10)



If we fall into the ways of the world without realising, there is a danger of stumbling and falling away from God.

Take care not to let that happen by walking in the Light, through prayer and worship.

Praise the Lord!



Hard Hitting Headlines...

Mike takes us in the book of James (Part 3)

FAVOURITISM BREAKS GOD'S LAWS

But if you show favouritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.

James 2: 9

FAVOURITISM LOOKS DOWN ON LOSERS

My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favouritism... You have dishonoured the poor.

James 2: 1, 6

FAVOURITISM CONTRADICTS GOD'S HEART

Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?

James 2: 5