



Quorn Baptist Church

Sunday Reflections

22nd March 2020

During this time while we cannot meet together physically, we would like to keep on sharing together in a number of ways including this weekly time of prayers, scriptures, songs and reflection. As the time goes by our audio CD and online video resources will hopefully become a little more polished.

Prayer

Lord God, help us to draw near to you as we spend some time in the scriptures, worship and prayer. May we know your presence with us and despite our separation may we know that we are all part of your family.

Reading ~ Romans 8:28-39

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.³⁰ And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him,

graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written:

‘For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Reflection

In my letter during the week I shared a few verses from Psalm 91 and some very brief thoughts.

“Surely He will save you...from the deadly pestilence... You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday... For He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”

Satan quoted the latter part when he tempted Jesus to jump from the temple. Jesus’ reply reminds us that we shouldn’t put God to the test.

God can protect, God can heal, but we do not put him to the test by deliberately exposing ourselves to harm or ignoring good advice on health.

I remember years ago watching a travel documentary- in the years before Simon Reeves, and the years before Michael Palin - Alan Whicker was the host. He visited a cult in America which took very literally the verse about taking up snakes (Mark 16:18). Many of them were injured by snakebites! So while we trust in God, let us not ignore the precautions that we are being advised to take: good hygiene, social distancing and self-isolation. Let's pray for the Lord's protection for those who's jobs make it less possible for them to reduce risk of exposure to the virus.

Does God send pandemics?

I would prefer to say that he allows them. It is fair to say that there are examples in Old and New Testaments where God seems to cause plague or illness (e.g. the plague of snakes in Numbers 21 or the illness described in 1 Corinthians 11 when Christians abuse communion). However, pandemics may also be part of the general consequences of living in a fallen world, a result of the disobedience of humankind to their Creator. One day God will complete His work of recreation (*new heavens and a new earth, no more death or mourning, or crying of pain*, Revelation 21; see also Romans 8:20-22). In the meantime there are signs of that future restoration when miracles come in answer to prayers.

Note: some Christians overemphasise verse like Isaiah 53:5, "*by his stripes we are healed*", claiming that Christians should not know any sickness. If they do it is a sign of sin or lack of faith. However, Isaiah clearly uses "parallel poetry" so that the above is equivalent to "*the*

punishment that brought us peace was upon him.” Primarily the healing of the cross is spiritual forgiveness, peace with God.

Perhaps the Lord allows the powerful forces of nature to remind us of the fragility of human life, to call us away from pride in human achievement, to call us to trust in him.

We remember Paul’s words later in Romans 8, *nothing can separate us from the love of Christ*. Taking a spiritual and eternal perspective while we take right precautions we do not fear. Paul’s list is not theoretical, he went through many of those things, but his eyes were on the Lord.

What shall we do?

For those who are able there will be many opportunities to help others, either informally aiding vulnerable neighbours or joining in with one of the schemes such as “Quorn Village Community Cares”. If you haven’t heard of that through Facebook or the Nextdoor App you should get a letter through the postbox soon.

We need to remember that people will need emotional support as well as practical. And as Christians we can offer spiritual help also. Let’s pray that our trust in God and the strength that brings us will be an encouragement to others to trust in God. Keep in touch with people and try to keep your trust in God in your words as well as in your hearts.

At 7 o’clock this evening there is a national prayer event and we are encouraged to place a candle symbolising the light of Christ in our front windows at that time. Please consider joining with this and extending some of our prayer ideas in your devotions at this time.

Song

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, You hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.

*It is well with my soul,
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

Though Satan should buffet, if trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

My sin—oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!—
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to His cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

For me, be it Christ, be it Christ hence to live:
If Jordan above me shall roll,
No pang shall be mine, for in death as in life
You wilt whisper Your peace to my soul.

But, Lord, 'tis for You, for Your coming we wait,
The sky, not the grave, is our goal;
Oh, trump of the angel! Oh, voice of the Lord!
Blessed hope, blessed rest of my soul!

And Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
Even so, it is well with my soul.

Prayers

Heavenly Father, we turn our hearts to you. You are utterly faithful, and you have never failed us. Grant us hope, strength and mercy in our time of need. Enable us to throw our cares onto you, our mighty God. O Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for those touched by the coronavirus, those who face sorrow, fear, illness and isolation. We ask for compassion, love, healing, and kindness. Make us a people living in your perfect love that we may drive away fear. O Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for wisdom and clarity for those making key decisions, for scientists, medical experts, politicians and public health officials. O Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for acts of kindness to spread in every community. We pray for calmness in the shops to replace panic buying. Enable us to be quick to see need and respond in gracious and loving ways. Take us through this time of trial. O Lord, hear our prayer.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

Notices

- Many will be recommended to self-isolate at this time. It may be that your usual support networks are not available for some of the time, so please do get in touch with the church if you need any help with anything.
- Please remember the foodbank. Donations can be dropped off at Quorn co-op, at church, or at the manse (23 Cradock Drive). Financial gifts are also useful for their work.

- We hope to organise some regular times when the church is open to drop in for prayer.
- Please pray for Ian and Juliana Horne in Colombia. There are some strict lock-down conditions and the Venezuelan refugees will find things extra difficult.
- Please pray for Peter Gamble and family. The Coalville Community Hospital is now closed to visitors. As Peter is making slow progress and the bed is needed Bill and Jane have been asked to look for a Nursing Home that he can be transferred to. Please pray that the Lord would provide what is best for Peter.

Sunday 22nd March

7.00pm

National Call to Prayer

Light a candle in your front window as a
symbol of the light of Christ.

Spend some time in prayer for the nation.

