

Talk for 17.05.20

So, it is probably a bit of an understatement to say that things are a bit weird at the moment - what are we going to be told next, what is the safe thing to do?

And quite apart from what is happening around us at the moment there always seems to be something that we are not happy about or saddened by.

Things may not be working out the way we'd hoped; we may have money worries; we may have relationship or friendship difficulties; or someone close to us may be desperately ill or have died.

There sometimes seems no sense in what has happened or is happening, and we may well ask - God - How could you?

The apostle Paul tells us in Philippians Ch 4, v 6 "do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God".

It is very easy and a very real characteristic of our human nature to look for someone or something to blame when things go wrong.

It might even be ourselves that we blame and then struggle to come to terms with something that we feel we could have avoided, if only we had done / said / reacted differently.

I think in order to make some sense of our difficult and troubled world we must firstly follow Paul's advice but we must also remember that and draw comfort from the fact that Jesus himself knew what it is to suffer - he understands and knows of our own suffering / sadness / difficulties and wants us to speak to him about them, as Paul says, "by prayer and supplication" .

Secondly, I think it is really important that we live our lives in community with others - our Church family should be a place where we can bring our sorrows as well as our joys and where we can support each other through our fellowship and unity with one another, albeit it virtually through services such as this or by other electronic means.

We know that the reason Jesus was sent by his Father to live amongst us was ultimately to die for us and to "take on our sins" but also He was to proclaim the Kingdom of Heaven which is where our own hope and future should be focused.

We are currently living in the time between Jesus' presence here on earth and the day in the future when He will return and the Kingdom of God will be fully

revealed to us when, as the book of Revelation tells us in Chapter 21 “He (God) will dwell with them (us).... He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away”. Isn’t that such a wonderful hope to be able to focus on?

Until that day, we will have “glimpses” of that Kingdom when good things happen, when we see people being healed, when we see people being helped in their times of need, when we are gladdened by events in our own lives.

Even now, in very uncertain times, we are seeing and hearing about some amazing random acts of kindness. But we must also expect that not everything can/will be perfect, not every prayer will be answered in the way we would like.

We must have absolute faith in our Lord Jesus and trust that “for those who love God all things work together for good” Romans Chapter 8, verse 28. In other words, we must trust in God’s Plan - not try to figure it out! He IS in control.

Thinking more about God’s Kingdom I wanted to mention two events within the Christian year that we will be celebrating later this month.

These are Ascension which marks the time of Jesus’ ascension into heaven; and Pentecost - the time when the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles.

The time between these two dates has in recent years been adopted by the Church of England to encourage a global prayer movement which invites Christians from all over the world to pray for more people to come to know Jesus.

This movement is referred to as “Thy Kingdom Come”.

We would normally be offering daily prayer meetings in church to focus together on this week of prayer but this year we obviously can’t do that, so, my invitation to you is to join us in taking time to pray at home during the period of 21st to 31st May so that we can be united in the prayer that more people would come to know Jesus and all the wonders that that knowledge can bring to our lives.

Amen

<https://www.thykingdomcome.global/>