



Giffnock the Park Church
Sunday 19th April 2020
Week 4
of the Covid 19 Lockdown

Good morning everyone,

I trust that you are okay and that everyone is keeping well. With all that has been happening. Our news feeds and daily papers are still constantly full of the current threat across our nation and even the world today. In speaking with a number of people over these past days I have been amazed at the resilience of people and how they maintain their spirits. Hasn't it been remarkable how a gentleman approaching his 100th birthday has raised over 18 million pounds to support Heath care through this crisis by doing laps round his house in the garden. He was only trying to raise £1000 but here we are £18,000,000 later. Amazing what can be achieved in a most unexpected way. I wonder if he read the text of Philippians 4: 13 ***"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."*** Like so many across our communities around the country, Park Church also sets aside time on a Thursday evening to clap hands, rattle pots and pans or hoot the horns of their cars and in our case ring the church bells to show appreciation of our Health and Social Care Service workers whose herculean efforts are maintaining people's health sometimes against the odds and as we have found in the news sometimes at great cost even to the loss of their own lives in the process. A reminder that there is no greater cause than saving the lives of others and also no greater cost than losing one's life doing it. ***"Greater love has no man than this than that he give his life for his friend" (John 15: 13)*** Afterall, isn't that the essence of the Easter story we have just celebrated.

In our Devotion this morning we look beyond the story of Easter and see what happened next for the Disciples, namely that they go to Galilee and Wait there for Jesus' next move. In our reflection today, I hope we begin to see how we can look beyond the fears of what today might hold and look to the hope that tomorrow might offer as we explore the idea that we might ***"Be Still and know that He is God"***.

As usual I have assigned a piece of music to accompany this devotion but hope that the day will soon come that we can enjoy the opportunity of worship together side bearing us lift our voice in thanks to God for sustaining us through these days.

As always I hope you stay well and keep free of illness at this time
With best wishes from all of us at the manse to all of you

Calum, Wilma & Stephen Macdonald



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A Thought
for Prayer

Let us Pray

***Seek the Lord while he may be found;
call on him while he is near. (Isaiah 55: 6)***

Our Heavenly father, once again at the end of another week we come before you in this time of devotion to seek your face again and to pray. As we reflect on your ever abiding presence; on your never ending love and concern for us; on your strength and your wisdom knowing when to act and when not, we pray that you would hear us now as we bring to you our deepest fears, our greatest concerns, our loved ones, friends and families. We look to you to always be our guide in the days of darkest times and lightest moments. Help us always to understand that in these moments that challenge us the most, that fill us with fear and dread; that you are always with us, even on these occasions when we do not recognise it.

Forgive us, our God and Father those occasions when our faith falters and when sin prevails. Forgive us when we have hurt others in the things we have said or done or even thought against them and make us ever aware of your watchful presence. And as we approach your throne of grace with a repentant heart, heal us with a measure of your grace that is pressed down and overflowing in your love for us once more. In so doing, may we see again that Easter story of victory over sin and power over even death itself Through your son and our Saviour.

But while we would pray for ourselves we would also pray for others... Lord Jesus we would give you thanks today for those who have given so much of themselves to help others, whether surgeons or doctors, nurses or carers, lorry drivers or supermarket assistants, we give you our thanks for them, for the help they have been and have given. We thank you for those who offer comfort in times of uncertainty and grief, for the reassurance they bring and the hope they offer. We pray for families with loved ones in Care or in Hospital, that they would know that they are not forgotten or unnoticed. We pray that you give all who struggle at this time courage for the day and times to come and faith in a Saviour who loved them gave Himself for them. May they and we always know the promise of a risen Saviour who will, "Always be with us even to the close of the age."

In Jesus' name we pray

Amen



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Reading

*from
God's Word*

Psalm 46

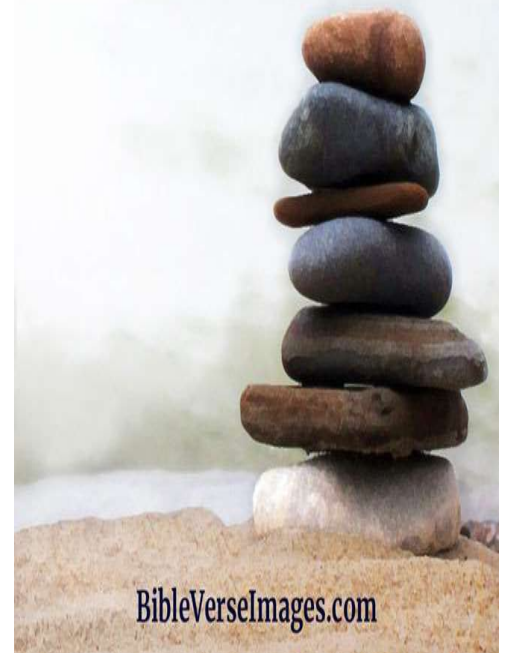
New International Version - UK

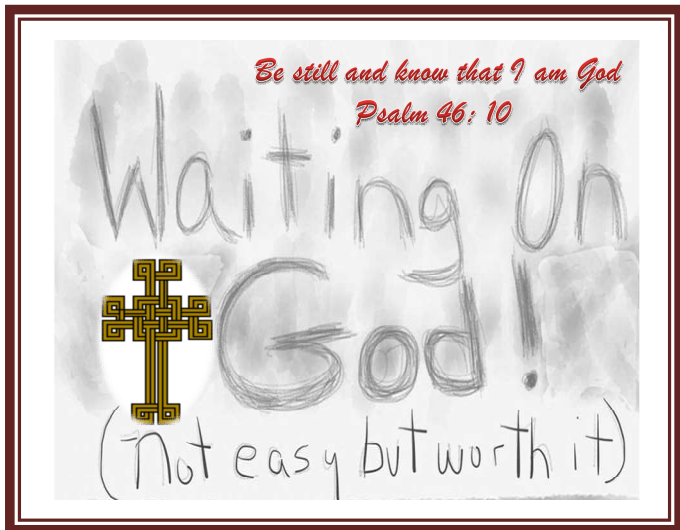
For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. According to alamoeth.^[b] A song.

- ¹ *God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.*
- ² *Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
³ though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.^[c]*
- ⁴ *There is a river whose streams make glad the city of
God,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.*
- ⁵ *God is within her, she will not fall;
God will help her at break of day.*
- ⁶ *Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.*
- ⁷ *The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.*
- ⁸ *Come and see what the LORD has done,
the desolations he has brought on the earth.*
- ⁹ *He makes wars cease
to the ends of the earth.
He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields^[d] with fire.*
- ¹⁰ *He says, 'Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth.'*
- ¹¹ *The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.*

*The peace of God,
which transcends
all understanding,
will guard your
hearts and minds.*

-Philippians 4:7





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A thought
For
Reflection

Very often as a minister you are confronted with people who want to ask a heavy theological question which theologians and philosophers have pondered over in colleges and universities having researched the subject and written an extensive thesis coming to conclusions that can sometimes vary dramatically from one another. It is usually at the times of a wedding when an uncle is at his most drunk, or that of a baptism where someone cynical about all things church just wants to see the minister squirm. Sometimes at two or three in the morning of a weekend party night on Sauchiehall Street , a university student who usually has had more than one drink too many might collar a street pastors team and ask the big questions like, “Why is there Evil in the World ? ; Who is God?” ,and “surely you don’t believe that crap?”

The reality is that none of these questions are really being asked genuinely seeking an answer, they are only seeking an emotional response of some sort. We live in a world where everything is instant, instant coffee, a 24 hour news cycle with news breaking often before the previous report has been shelved. People take video footage of disasters and post it on social networks for the world to see immediately and many today do not like to be told they have to wait. It is more difficult nowadays for our politicians to stall for time when confronted with difficult questions or situations. Sometimes we demand to know the answer to our questions now and do not feel we should have to wait.

Much has been written about the life of Corrie Ten Boom who along with her father and sister living in Holland were part of an escape network helping Jewish families escape the clutches of the Germans in Nazi Occupied Europe at the time , who themselves were incarcerated in one of these awful concentration camps.

A story is told of Corrie Ten Boom’s father. He had to hurry away from the house one evening having packed his bag for a long, unknown trip to hide away. At the train station and in the middle of a highly tense moment, little Corrie wanted her father’s attention. She wasn’t sure when he would be back and she just had to ask him a question.

"Dad, I have a question for you," she said. "Okay, Corrie, but please hurry, the train is coming," said Dad.

"Well, I want you to tell me about the facts of life before you leave us" she blurted out. Corrie’s father was stunned and then he knelt down by his little girl.

"Child, I first want you to do something for me. I want you to pick up my baggage for the trip," replied Mr. Ten Boom. Corrie tried hard to lift the bag but could not. Then she said,

"Daddy, I am just a little girl. That bag is too heavy for me to carry."

Her father put his arm around his little girl and said, "*Corrie, the question you asked me is also too heavy for you to carry right now. When the time is right.....your Father will tell you.*"

Sometimes we ask God some really heavy questions and we never seem to get the answer we want. Just know that He might be putting His arm around us right now and whispering into our hearts, "That question is too heavy for you to carry right now.....but one day, when the time is right, your Father in Heaven will help you to understand."

We will be left with all sorts of questions when all this is over, but I think the lesson from that moment in Corrie Ten Boom's life is one for us all at this time. Often it is with hindsight that we see God's hand at work which at the time we could not see or refused to see. The text of Psalm 46 has often been described as the Soldier's Prayer where it speaks of God bringing war to an end. But the conclusion of it all rests on that of, Verse 10, which reminds us that we,

"Be Still and Know that He is God;"

As I get older I am comforted by that strong Calvinist way of thinking more and more that God is Sovereign over His Creation and while we may not understand just now why so much life is being lost and so much misery is being caused by something so small but no less significant, reminding us that life is a fragile story for us all and should not to be taken for granted. Take heart that with the thought that when the time is right our Father in Heaven will tell us the answers to these great questions. The Apostle Paul said

"For now these three remain, Faith Hope and Love and the greatest of these is Love"
(1 Cor 13: 13)

While the greatest of these is indeed Love, Faith and Hope are no less significant for us, they are two vital aspects of God's plans for us which will sustain us through these difficult days. For Now, as we give God thanks for a week gone by, let us also look to God in Faith and Hope for the week to come.

In closing I think the words of Tiny Tim from Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol sum things up nicely when he said, "*God Bless us , every one*"

Calum D. Macdonald

Prayer for Blessing

in your time of need
May you be blessed with friends to
comfort and protect you
May you be safe and not frightened
May you have food and shelter to give
you strength
And may hope overcome your sadness
and joy return
AMEN

ROOM 6 SACRED HEART SCHOOL THORNDON
ALISON THORNDON