

Henley-in-Arden Baptist Church  
“Staying Connected” 19 – Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2020

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*Staying connected to God and each other while not meeting as church in the normal way*

We continue with Paul’s letter to the Romans and some lessons in the outworking of our faith. This week chapter 14.

“So then, we must always aim at those things that bring peace and that help strengthen one another.” (Romans 14:19)

Pausing to take stock of things over these past weeks, my reflection is that people have coped with this pandemic and the associated lockdown in various ways. A minority have thrived on it; some have suffered dreadfully; most, I suspect, have found it difficult, one way or another. I count myself in that category. Different responses; different circumstances perhaps. Similarly, there are always different approaches to aspects of Christian living and ways to express our faith. Of course there are; it would be boring if we were all the same, wouldn’t it? The interesting thing is that whatever the circumstances we find ourselves in – crisis or otherwise – and however we see things, we can co-exist well and respect our different takes on things, different responses, and grow in love nonetheless. The lesson of Romans 14 is perhaps that attitudes of tolerance and empathy towards others are an important part of gospel living. In all things, in our strengths and our weaknesses, we can point to the God who loves us. God loves all people.... What about us?

In Paul’s day, in Romans 14, the issue here was around food laws and religious etiquette. Some Christians’ consciences led them to

one set of practices; others had a different view. Paul explains that more important than the actual issue is an attitude of love and respect for one another. I am always encouraged when Christians of different persuasions can work and worship together – I think it must bring glory to the God of love

FOLLOW AFTER THAT WHICH MAKE FOR



PEACE

Psalm 133

- <sup>1</sup> How good and pleasant it is  
when God’s people live together in unity!
- <sup>2</sup> It is like precious oil poured on the head,  
running down on the beard,  
running down on Aaron’s beard,  
down on the collar of his robe.
- <sup>3</sup> It is as if the dew of Hermon  
were falling on Mount Zion.  
For there the LORD bestows his blessing,  
even life for evermore.

Lord God, our heavenly Father, help us to be generous in our tolerance and love for others – in the churches and beyond. Forgive us for times when our attitude has been ungodly and judgemental.

God of grace and mercy, we thank You for the love we ourselves have received in Your Son, Jesus, our Lord. Whether our faith is strong or weak, we ask that You would draw us close to You, and help us to know the fulness of Your love day by day and week by week.

We pray for those for whom the current time presents extra difficulty: restore a good level of well-being in mind, body and spirit, we pray; and give extra help and strength to those facing particular challenges. We pray especially for the bereaved at this time: particularly those known to us. God of all comfort, bring comfort to those who are sad and grieving; and a special measure of Your consoling love, we pray.

And as the ongoing global crisis continues, help us, Lord, to have big and gracious hearts to those carrying burdens of responsibility on our behalf; and increase our trust in You, we pray.

We pray this week for upholsterers, urologists, used car salesmen and for viral immunologists, veterinary surgeons, video conferencing technicians... bless them with skill, opportunities for service, and peace in times of worry and difficulty.

Thank You Lord, for Your perfect, saving love: expressed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Help us, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to live and work to Your praise and glory.  
Amen

You are my hiding-place,  
You always fill my heart  
with songs of deliverance  
whenever I am afraid.  
I will trust in You,  
I will trust in You,  
let the weak say:  
'I am strong in the strength of my God.'

*[Michael Ledner, 1981]*

For those not online, especially:  
Worship services on radio and TV this Sunday include:

- Radio 4 8:10am Sunday Worship:  
'Great is Thy Faithfulness'
- BBC1 1:15pm Songs of Praise

And finally, please do get in touch with me at any time

Mike 01564 793975

*"The LORD bless you  
and keep you;  
the LORD make his face shine on you  
and be gracious to you;  
the LORD turn his face towards you  
and give you peace."* (Numbers 6:24-26)

*Quiz question:*

Which 1986 musical seems to have an item with a similar music pattern to the worship song, 'You are my hiding place'?

*[Answer next week]*