

Henley-in-Arden Baptist Church  
“Staying Connected” 20 – Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2020

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

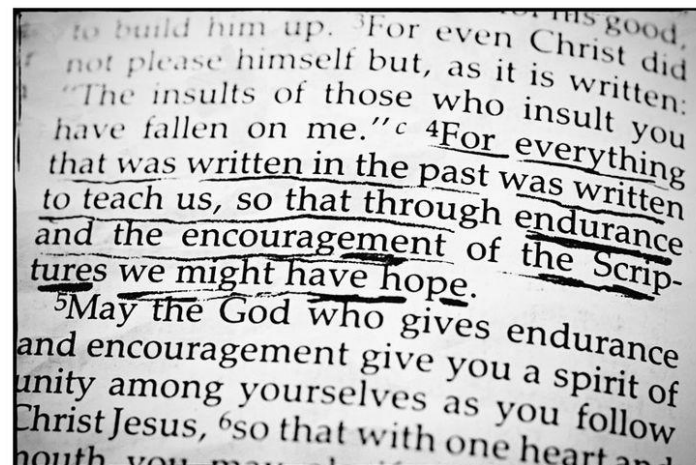
So, who would have thought we would be into August and still experiencing the practical restrictions that make life rather difficult and leaving us with a strange sense of unease, perhaps. We were made for community, never meant to be isolated; and so we long for the time when we can get back to meeting physically, and enjoying a fuller life-experience including worship and fellowship together. We continue to mull over – in conjunction with the guidelines – as to what and when might be possible and practical in terms of managing a future return to some level of at least semi-normal services in the church premises. For now, though, we ask for an appropriate level of patience as we watch and pray..

This week’s passage is Romans chapter 15

We see, as we’ve already noted, that Paul was hoping to go to Spain. But the consensus is he never made it. I think we can see a similar pattern repeated in many experiences through life, our own included. Our control of future events is, of course, limited. The attitude of planning for good, though, is very much an admirable one. Martin Luther famously said, “Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree.” When we pray “Your kingdom come; Your will be done: on earth as in heaven” we are saying the same thing, really – continually looking forward, and praying accordingly. Not all our hopes and dreams are met; and we do sometimes carry a sense of regret; but

in Jesus, and his experience of the cross and resurrection, regret fades away; and our hopes and dreams are transformed...

Let’s allow scripture – and the God behind the scriptures – to encourage us.



Versify: Life

Romans 15:4

More Bible verse images at VersifyLife.com

NIV

The theme of hope looms large: Our hope is in God.



WeLoveTheBible.com

Romans 15:13

This little story reminds us that bibles can get dusty...

*“A small boy with an exploring spirit decided to investigate a top shelf where he’d never looked before. Climbing on a chair he looked along the shelf but only found a dusty Bible. He took it to his mother and said, “Mum, isn’t this God’s book?” His mother said, “Yes, I suppose it is.” “Well”, said the boy, “hadn’t we better send it back because we don’t use it?”*

Let’s learn from this: can I encourage you to consider whether your bible reading practices and habits may benefit from a refreshing in some way. Let me know if you would like any help or tips on this.

Lord God, thank You for the hope we have in You. For the comfort that brings, for the promise of Your presence with us. In Jesus we see Your victorious love demonstrated in action. And so we can have confidence that whatever our life circumstance – past, present and future; our hope is real and certain.

We confess, though, our weakness, our struggles – and, Lord, we cry out to you with our weariness, our anguish perhaps... and we ask for healing for our hurts, Your presence in our sorrow; and a touch again of Your refreshing, transforming love. Thank You for Your intimate care for each of us.

*[In our weekly prayers by occupation, we have reached the letter ‘x’! (Thank you for your offers of help(!))]*

And so we pray for window cleaners, warehouse specialists, waitresses... X-ray technicians, xylophonists, x-ray equipment testers... Lord Jesus, You experienced a life of daily toil as you went about Your business in Nazareth. We pray for strength for those involved in the above lines of work, and for Your blessing...

We continue to pray for decision-makers in this country and around the world in these uncertain times: for wisdom, clarity; and a sense of Your guidance as we live through this pandemic. And we pray for medical solutions, vaccines, and good management of the processes of research and its outcomes.

Lord God, who cares for all people – we thank You that we can have confidence in You.

For Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory – for ever.

Amen

*Answer to last week’s quiz question:*

‘Phantom of the Opera’

*This week’s joke:*

Q: Why didn’t Noah go fishing?

*[Answer below]*

For those not online, especially:

Worship services on radio and TV this Sunday include:

- Radio 4 8:10am Sunday Worship
- BBC1 1:15pm Songs of Praise

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

“The God of peace be with you all” (Romans 15:33)

Mike 01564 793975

*Answer to joke:*

A: Because he only had two worms.