

Henley-in-Arden Baptist Church
“Staying Connected” 24 – Sunday 30th August 2020

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

This week - a tremendous, affirming, passage from 1 Peter:

1 Peter 2: 4-10

⁴ As you come to him, the living Stone – rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him – ⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For in Scripture it says:

‘See, I lay a stone in Zion,
a chosen and precious cornerstone,
and the one who trusts in him
will never be put to shame.’

⁷ Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe,

‘The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone,’

⁸ and,

‘A stone that causes people to stumble
and a rock that makes them fall.’

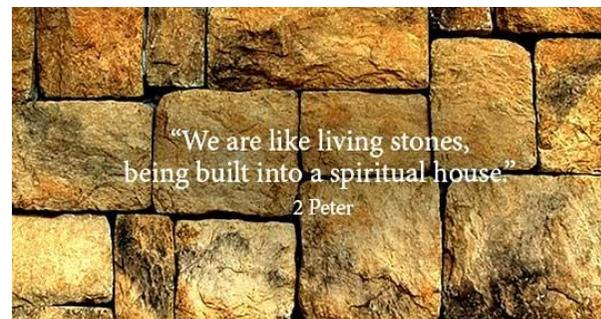
They stumble because they disobey the message – which is also what they were destined for.

⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Being church – the people of God – is a corporate thing; we are not just a random collection of individuals; but we are privileged to be part of a team that God is building into something special. And with this privilege comes responsibility: “to declare God’s praises”. Again, this is something we do together (not least by the love we show each other and all people). And all because Christ makes it all possible.

In our lockdown – or semi-lockdown – experience, the physical building clearly becomes less important (though it will be great to experience again the familiar gatherings of fellowship and worship that we long for!). We are, rather, reminded that we are being built into a ‘spiritual house’. And this is on-going. We are a ‘work-in-progress’!

Meanwhile, and as we continue as He leads, let’s be thankful for the ongoing activity of God in our lives, and what Jesus has made possible. And let’s continue to seek ways to continue to build each other up, with the Spirit’s help.



Lord God, our heavenly Father,

You are all knowing, all powerful, and all loving. Thank You for your salvation plan for the world in Jesus. Thank You that You call us – to be church – to witness to Your love for mankind and all of creation. Thank you that the church is built on the sure foundation of Jesus Christ; and that You invite us to be part of this ‘spiritual building’. Thank You for this immense privilege! Thank You for Your love.

Forgive us, Father, where we have abused Your love; where we have acted selfishly and not in love for You and others. Restore in us a passion for Your name – help us by the Holy Spirit to walk in Your ways – to Your praise and glory.

We bring to You our prayers for others. We pray for those in government, that they would have the wisdom and skill to lead us through these days of ongoing pandemic. We pray for those living with fear and uncertainty – with health issues, with economic issues, or with a general malaise. Inspire them – and us – with Your hope, we pray. And may we who have received Your grace and mercy, share these gifts with others. And may we trust You for signs of a substantive breakthrough in these current difficulties.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayers.

“Your kingdom come; Your will be done on earth as in heaven”

Thank You for Jesus: that He has overcome death itself; and is alive and reigning. Thank You for the sure and certain hope we have in Him. We bring our prayers in His name. Amen

From ‘Bloopers in Church Bulletins’:

“Don't let worry kill you off - let the church help.” (!)

I came across this quote:

“The Christian family is like branches of a tree, growing in different directions, but having the same root.”

For those not online, especially:

Worship services on radio and TV this Sunday include:

- Radio 4 8:10am Sunday Worship
- BBC1 12:25pm Songs of Praise

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

May God bless you with His peace.

Mike

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“May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”
(2 Corinthians 13:14)