



Faith at Home

Growing Faith | Week 8 | 18 May 2020

Thought for the week

Accrington - a good place to grow old in, a good place to grow up in

By Reverend Hugh Scriven, Accrington St John with Huncoat St Augustine.

Sometimes when you read the Bible a passage leaps out at you. That happened to me a week or two ago. It was preparing for a service for VE day. The service had presumably been written months ago, by someone in the central church. At that time no-one had ever heard of Covid 19 virus, and they imagined that any service would have been a big public affair. Instead I was going to be recording it alone in the Pals' chapel in St John's church. The Bible passage would have been chosen with the 75th celebrations of the end of the war in mind, but it seemed to be so appropriate for how we're feeling now in lockdown.

It was from the book of the prophet Zechariah, writing to people who had been captured and taken away from home to live in exile hundreds of miles away in Babylon. It's a vision of normal, happy, healthy life back in Jerusalem.

It goes like this: "Thus says the LORD of hosts: Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand because of their great age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets."

The Message Bible puts it like this:

"Old men and old women will come back to Jerusalem, sit on benches on the streets and spin tales, move around safely with their canes - a good city to grow old in. And boys and girls will fill the public parks, laughing and playing - a good city to grow up in"

It had first been pointed out to me some years ago as a great picture of the kind of cities and towns that we should be trying to create - good places to grow old in, and good places to grow up in. But now its picture of old men and women moving around safely and boys and girls playing seemed to describe just what I miss so much at the moment.

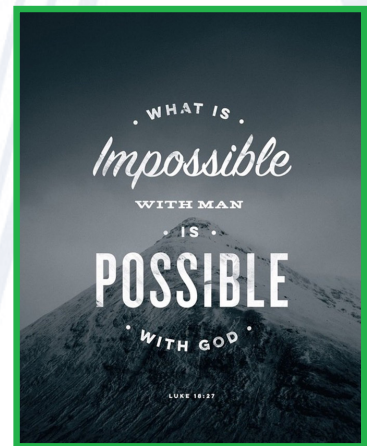
And I'd never noticed the next verse, which goes like this: "Thus says the LORD of hosts: Even though it seems impossible to the remnant of this people in these days, should it also seem impossible to me, says the LORD of hosts?"

It may seem at times as if those days when we can all move or play safely again in the streets and parks will never come. But, just as God promised it to the exiles in Babylon, and just as that may have provided hope for people in the dark days of the Second World War, so it can strengthen us. When it seems impossible to us, it's still possible to God. We can pray with confidence for that day to come - not just because we want it, but because we know God wants it too - he's promised it.

And how many other things might that apply to as well?

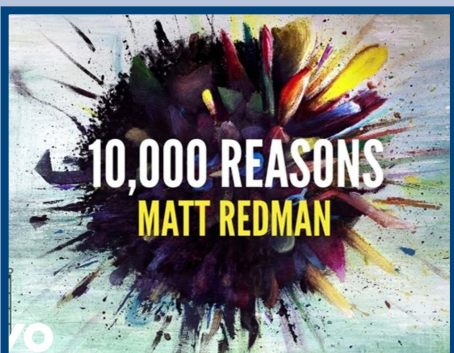


Please click here to view the video.



Sunday 7pm School Song

Why not sing this as we light our candles together!



Teenager's Tip

Spend time wisely

Katie Hambilton from Year 9

It's been a difficult several weeks for many, but we've all been finding ways to occupy our days and entertain ourselves. I've taken it as an opportunity to reconnect with long distance friends through a call or a message and make the most of this quality time with my family. I have enjoyed going on daily walks with my family. Without the distractions of phones and TV's, we talk about how we are coping and share any worries we may have. Although it is great to spend time with the people we love, I've found it's important to have time to myself. During the day, I spend time alone reading, doing school work or simply listening to music. This helps me to focus and gives me time away from my amazing, though sometimes vexing little sister. When the weather is nice, we find it fun to play on the trampoline, have water fights and spend time in the garden together. Then at night, we watch a movie as a family and of course clap for the NHS on the weekly 'Clap for Carers' event on Thursdays.

It can be hard to keep hope in stressful times, however it is important to remember we are all going through this together and everyone copes in different ways. Whether that's taking up a new hobby like baking, being there for those in need or playing a board game with your family. But know, now as ever you can find clarity in the words of the Lord and comfort in your faith.

Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him.

Psalms 62: 5

Poem for the Week

Chosen and explained by Rachel Shovelton:

If you have your bible handy, you may want to read Mark 11:1-10.

Jesus was on a mission, a mission to save. Upon arriving at the Holy city of Jerusalem the people shouted - 'HOSANNAH' which means 'save'. The crowd were uninhibited, not worrying how they looked or sounded or what people might think of their shouting and singing.

This reminds me so much of the general outpouring of praise for our frontline & key workers at present. All around on Thursday evenings you can hear the clapping and cheering, the wooden spoons banging loudly on pans, general noise echoing round our empty streets and towns. Some people have even been singing at their front door. The key workers all play their important part using their gifts and skills.

Healing, comforting, nurturing, nourishing, protecting, loving. Many attributes used to describe Jesus.

'HOSANNAH!' Another outcry I've heard, 'What can I do, stuck at home?' It's a conversation that I've had recently with friends and not least with myself! Maybe we need a change of mindset. We aren't 'stuck at home,' we are 'safe at home' & 'saving lives,' including our own. We all have vital roles to play in this.

I've had a sulk about receiving 'THAT LETTER' inviting (TELLING) me to stay at home and shield as I'm high risk and no, I'm not over 70. I felt my wings had been clipped. Maybe it's about listening to God- not many of us can truly say we don't have time. Maybe it's about protecting resources and each other, by doing what is right. Maybe we're being given an opportunity here.

In time, this will be a memory, let's hope we all gave the best we had. Let's pray we too can be less inhibited by what people think. We can still praise God and worship, just in different ways. In my season of shielding (not sulking), the birds all seem to sing louder and I too am singing. Reminds me of my favourite poem 'I know why the caged bird sings'.

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

Maya Angelou

A free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wing
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks
down his narrow cage
can seldom see through
his bars of rage
his wings are clipped and
his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to
sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill for the
caged bird
sings of freedom.

Church Support

Here are links to some alternative services and ways to contact some of our School Chaplains or their Churches. You are not alone!

Revd Ian Enticott: Accrington St. James and St. Paul, find their YouTube Channel [here](#).

Revd Hugh Scriven: Huncoat St. John's and Augustine's is happy to send news, some written prayers and Bible reflections each week to anyone upon request. Please email him [here](#) or on their YouTube channel [here](#).

Revd Mark Pickett: Clitheroe St. James, Virtual Prayer Space and weekly online services can be found [here](#).

Father Chris Holden: Rishton St Peter's and St Paul's is happy for you to get in touch with him use this [email](#).

Pastor Matthew Clay: Great Harwood Christian Fellowship, find their channel [here](#).

Rev Toby Webber: Clayton All Saints have short family friendly times of worship at 10:45am each Sunday followed by a fuller service at 11am, and Friday Praise each Friday at 6:30pm. Night prayer daily at 9:30pm and other times as announced. Visit their [Facebook Page](#) for more info.

Father Andy Froud: Clitheroe St Mary Magdalene, prayers and worship online can be found [here](#).

A Church Near You: A website to help you find out what is going on in a Church local to you. Follow this [link](#).

Further links will be provided in future weekly bulletins.

Song of the Week

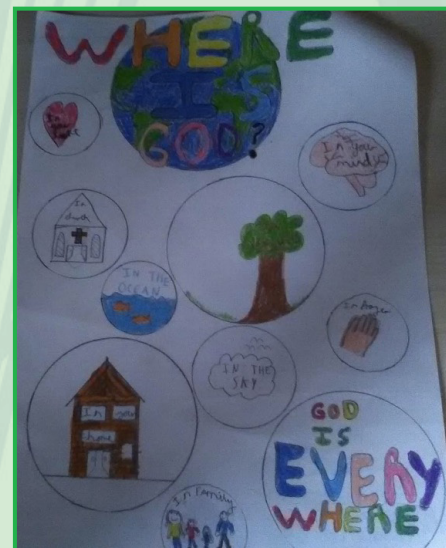


Blessed Be Your name

"The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully[a] will also reap bountifully."

2 Corinthians 6:9

Look at this great reminder by James Harper:



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