



ALLANDER EVANGELICAL CHURCH

FELLOWSHIP NEWSLETTER

27th April, 2020

Welcome again to another issue of your Newsletter. Here we raise our Ebenezer, and say "hither by Thy help we've come".

Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus

Following on from the phrase cited at the end of last week's sermon – *They looked for Jesus* – John took us to Philippians and Paul's very personal plea to a church that was showing signs of issues which might affect its testimony. Christian life in an alien environment was becoming a challenge. Yet, echoing previous sermons, they had been "called to be saints" and to be part of His purpose. Being loved by God did not exempt them from facing hardships. Indeed it was a privilege to be 'witnesses' in such a context. Constantly, he echoes a note of joy and rejoicing. How can that be?

The answer is not to look at problems but to look to Jesus: to share His mind-set.

Paul reminds them that, having Jesus, they should be **encouraged** because of their union with Christ; **comforted** in being loved by God; enjoy **fellowship in the Spirit**; and appreciate experiencing and expressing **tenderness and compassion**.

Why were they in danger of becoming disintegrated? It wasn't the enemy or circumstances but their own self-centredness. So, having Jesus, then let us "forget about ourselves and concentrate on Him" thus walking worthy of our vocation and reflecting His purpose.

Tunnel Vision

Passing through this strange experience of being in lockdown is almost like being in a tunnel. Yet, we have heard much through ministry and communications to give the assurance that not only is God with us but that He also will use this to further his purposes if we believe and respond aright. So, a key question is: what are we learning in this experience? What changes is God seeking to effect in us as individuals and as a church through our response to it all. What will be our "tunnel" vision?

Update from Inga (with more next week)

I would like to thank you all for your prayers as I travelled from Mexico. The journey went well. All the restaurants in Paris were closed, so that meant I couldn't buy any meals, but I did have snacks along with me. The airport was almost empty.

I have settled in to an Airbnb flat in Dalkeith. I will be here for the 14 days quarantine, and then I will move along the road to stay with some good friends for the duration of my teaching responsibilities, which end at the beginning of June. The length of my stay in Scotland, in one sense, will be determined by the situation with COVID-19. However, ultimately the details are in God's hands. Please pray for me as I teach, and also that God would overrule as to when I can get back home to Mexico.

Zooming Along, Almost

The prayer meeting on Tuesday was going well until suddenly Zoom applied the guillotine: the free 40 minutes had expired! This is being rectified for this week with the details changed to:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87877981091?pwd=c2lCMETzRVducGp6elZiczg1WkJqUT09>

Meeting ID: 878 7798 1091 Password: 017829

Getting to Know Your Bible

The special Bible Studies planned for April and May, but suspended because of the pandemic, may now be offered using Zoom, probably on Thursday nights. More details next week.

People

Please remember Isabel Nicol whose sister, Christine, passed away last week while in the Hospice. Isabel has been very faithful in looking after her sister. Our prayers are with her.

Allyson and Jim Flett would like to thank everyone who sent greetings and who prayed for them during their recent bereavement.

And, let's remember those who are on their own and feeling doubly isolated in these days.

Let's Take Up the Offering!

Each of us is having to "work out our own salvation" in this crisis. It would be good to share experiences of those things that have and are helping us through these times. For example, Jim Gourley sent in a text from Psalm 47: 7, 8, which is a comforting thought in these days. *For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise. God reigns over the nations; God sits on his holy throne.*

And Betty Mackay says how she has appreciated using the time to read the Bible as she would a normal book – from beginning to end tracing the providence of God and getting to understand His ways.

It would be good to have more. Please feel free to contribute any experience so that others can benefit from it. Send them to howeljones@outlook.com Sharing encouragements like this is good.

Many churches are finding Zoom to be a blessing enabling all kinds of legitimate 'gatherings'. In addition to meeting for prayer by Zoom we could also meet for informal fellowship where we could share some of our experiences and help each other by keeping in touch.



Finally:

An understandable complaint I heard in the past week, is the feeling of frustration that people have not been able to enjoy the good weather to its full potential. No trips to the beach, or such like, that would normally be undertaken. Undoubtedly annoying and yet a reminder that the restrictions do not prevent us from fulfilling the very purpose for which we exist, "to glorify God and enjoy Him forever". Enjoy Him this week, whatever the weather.

John Macleod