

Musings from the Manse-Week 10 24/05/20

Nothing really interesting happened this week. It was the same old same old. The highlight was cleaning out the pond pump and filter, yuck. Actually, that did become a worthwhile activity. Because I can't use my right hand at the moment, I supervised Jill as she carried out the task on my behalf. She did a great job, I have to say that, or I will end up in the pond, at least the waters clear now!

Humans are very adaptable; a majority of people have quickly adjusted to this new way of life. We are all probably doing things we are not used to. Perhaps we don't like it or fully understand it but we cope with it the best ways we can. We have time to appreciate the simple things in life. Through our separation and deprivation, we rediscover what is important to us. Interestingly now as we see a lessening of restrictions to lock down people are very cautious, even frightened to mix with people again. We have been so conditioned to stay at home. I am reminded of wildlife documentaries showing animals emerging from hibernation. A few tentative steps out staying close to home, then gradually back to normal. Things will not be spontaneous for a while. We will have to rethink how we live. An element of planning will have to be a part of our lives. Freedom and normality will return but it will look different for a transitional period. Who knows how long that period will last? If and when things get back to how they were what lessons will we have learned? How can we take what has been positive and perhaps rediscovered and apply it to our world, to make it a better place?

I read the following in a book on WW2 ministry of information publications and posters.

*'In times of trouble and hardship, you need an antidote so that you can keep your positive attitude and march forward with determination and hope. Be deliberate in activities that are *positive, heart-warming, stress reducing and laughter inducing! Together, we'll get through this'.*

I would like to add '*focused on God' to the list, but it's a good list for us now. Through prayer and worship in all its current forms we will get through this.

Ascension Day

Luke 24 ⁴⁹I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." **Acts 1** ⁷He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Between Easter and Pentecost, we celebrate the Ascension of Jesus back to heaven. That is the subject of my talk this week (at gurg.org.uk). At the end of Luke, we read that in response to His ascension, the disciples worshiped Jesus. They did that with great joy. But they couldn't stay there on the Mount of Olives. They were instructed to return to Jerusalem a couple miles away. They were told to stay in Jerusalem and wait where they continued to worship. There was no time or date given for the next stage of God's plan, just wait. They had no real idea what it may have meant to be clothed in power from on high. But they had seen the resurrected Jesus and they had seen him return to his father in heaven. So they waited with great expectation for this promised gift. The disciples seem different now somehow refocused on their mission. Why the big change? I think it had to be because there was no longer any doubt in their minds that Jesus was who He said He was all along – God in the flesh, the King of heaven and earth. And I think that they were also confident that this was not the last time they would see Jesus. He had given them the assurance that He was going to prepare a place for them and that he would return to take them there to be with Him. But for now, wait get ready for a new way of life. Wait for the Gift from the Father. Soon it will be Pentecost.

Passages that have come to me this week.

Joshua 1:9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

Philippians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Andrew and Jill