



highworth community church | 01 may 2020

CONTACT

registered charity no. 1030002

HELLO!

So much may feel uncertain at the moment, but you can always rely on a delivery of *Contact*! Hopefully, you'll experience a little more connection to your church family as we navigate this time together. Bless you, dear Family.



A LOCKED DOWN ROSE DURING LOCKDOWN

by Eoli Peri

Anyone who knows me knows that I really enjoy gardening. However, sometimes in my own garden I can only see the things that need to be done, rather than the beauty that I feel God would like me to see. The beauty that he created. In this Coronavirus situation, I have had more time to value what I see around me. So, as I walk I am interested in other people and their gardens. Some are just tidy—some are not. Some are filled with beautiful flowers, colours bursting out of the stems.

It is a great time to stop, chat, and get to know old and new neighbours. As I walked to work the other morning, God showed me a particular rose bush. A healthy, large emerald green rose bush. I then remembered that I had admired it previous years ago, as roses are my favourite flowers.

I thought to myself as I was still, strolling along, 'Thank you Lord, something to lift my day.'

This rose is usually stunning when it is blooming; it smells as sweet as

perfume. I then took a second glance at this peach-coloured rose and I couldn't believe my eyes.

It reflected my exact feelings!

This was not what I had expected as it did not look like the usual rose. It was jaded from the rain. It was faded; it looked like it had lost its purpose. It looked tired and, more importantly, it looked sad. Then I noticed it was oddly, but amazingly, growing through iron bars! It was literally a rose locked down during lockdown.

Could God be talking to me through this? I felt that God was saying, 'I understand how you are feeling. I know you, and I know that you are able to carry on through this.' This gave me a great sense of hope and comfort. I remembered a phrase that came to mind during that exact moment. It was a phrase that a special friend used to say to me, frequently...

'This will pass.'

This lady was a lovely Christian. Marian read her bible daily and I felt God put her in my life for this reason. She was an influence to my faith and I admired her love of the bible.

On Monday, I told Rodney Kingston at prophetic school (on Zoom) about the beautiful rose during lockdown. I further showed him the photo that I took of it (you can see it over the page). This is my interpretation of what he voiced to me about the rose.

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A Locked Down Rose

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God sees us even during the lockdown. It is not so much about what we can or cannot do, it is being ourselves during this time. Being a child of God. In Song of Solomon 2:1, we attribute to Jesus the name of The Rose of Sharon. But actually it is us who are called the Rose of Sharon. God wants to underline to us that no matter what his people can or cannot do in lockdown, in his eyes they are a rose and they are a rose that is perfectly acceptable in perfume to him, because of what Jesus has done.

Knowing we are children of God doesn't make us immune to feeling upset, down or discouraged about our circumstances. But, with the help from

God and wise people around us, we CAN get through ANYTHING. I know and have faith that that rose will bloom again, this therefore gives me hope for the current situation and the future.

Blessings to you all,

Eoli

Lord God,

You made the seasons of my life as you have made the seasons of the earth. Help me to remember spring follows winter, and the challenge I am facing today will pass. Thank you for that victory to come.

In Jesus name Amen.

ENDURANCE

by Jon Hares

What's the nature of endurance?
Is it simply waiting for a storm to pass?
Biding your time, then taking your chance?
Wishing that this year you can still go to the South of France?
Or is it more like breaking out in a rain drenched dance?
Choosing to prance about in the face of the enemy, in your kitchen or living room?

Is endurance a marathon and not a sprint?

Is it believing for a golden wedding
When all that may exist is a glint in two pairs of young eyes?
Is endurance hiding in a small tin shelter
Or hanging around in a three-bedroomed bunker?
Does it honestly look like lying on a sofa
Watching the days go by on tv, even Piers Morgan?

Thank God!
Endurance looks like scorning shame

Endurance

(continued)

Never leaving the world the same as it was yesterday
By the power of his mighty name
Perfect innocence, destroying blame.

Endurance looks like perseverance
Falling often, and getting up for a second chance, anyway
Acknowledging new mercy bought for us, every day.
Living with hope that usurps today's troubles.

Endurance looks like joy in every circumstance
Lifting up our cries to heaven,
Believing God will send us Manna.
Endurance throws off everything that mind hinder
Endurance is loving, and choosing to be kinder
Endurance looks like bearing with one another.
Endurance is service in the face of displeasure

Endurance is suffering clothed with joy
Believing that this is not the end of our story
Bearing fruit in drought like conditions
Endurance is living out Christ's Great Commission.

Endurance is giving the best that you're able.
Endurance is following Christlike examples
Endurance is guiding with gentleness and endeavour.
Endurance is praying with even greater fervour.

Endurance is offering ourselves on his altar.
Endurance is knowing that when your faith falters
Your Father still delights in his daughters, and sons
Endurance is waiting for the Lord to renew your strength
Endurance looks like Love.

(If you want to explore the biblical background to this modern psalm, then check out: Hebrews 12:1-12; 2 Corinthians 1:3-6; Phillipians 2:5-11; 1 Timothy 6:11-16; Colossians 1:9-14; Romans 12, and Romans 15.)

RESCUE MISSION

by Carole Brewster

The following is an extract taken from Carole Brewster's daily devotions. It reads:

'Jesus has not come to hold a party, but a rescue mission—a rescue mission to save the world. The mission is so important that, like invasion troops, before going into any major conflict or perilous mission, His followers may have to write their last letters home, set aside their own possessions, and put their lives at risk. If we really understood the real emergency, He seems to be saying, brought on by the arrival of God's kingdom in our midst, we would be willing to go on without our most precious things and rally to His cause.'

For further encouragement, read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18.

AS SEEN ON FACEBOOK

Phil Baker

14 May

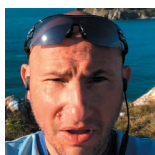


I have recently come across a batch of quotes from William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army. Here is one to get you thinking today

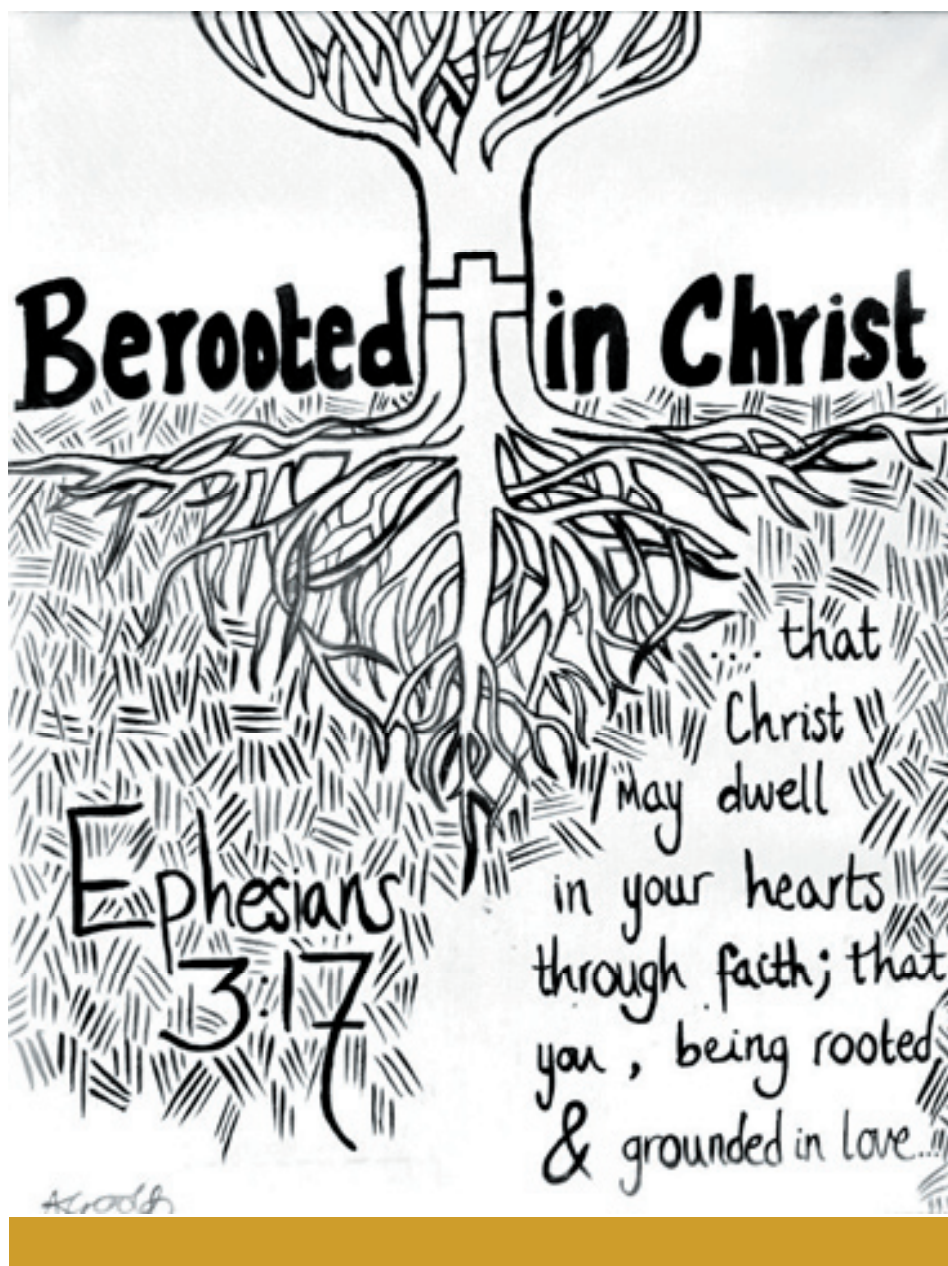
'The greatness of the man's power is the measure of his surrender.'

Nathan Barnes

14 May



I'm not great when reading the Bible, my attention span is poor, and my mind drifts to things like, what am I gonna buy at Asda today? This morning was different, after reading the hiding place, listening to the daily message came alive, I actually went back to the beginning and listened again, then read the same passage in *Bible Gateway*. My new fave in the Bible is Romans 14. Have a good day y'all.



DEEP ROOTS

by Jacky Storey

This picture, which used to be in The Bridge Centre, was very kindly given to me by Kathryn following a prayer appointment a few months ago.

It is the first thing I see each morning and is a great reminder of the importance of deep roots of trust to keep us strong in our faith, particularly during this time.

I had a clear reminder of this when I was pulling out the old canes from the bamboo tree in our garden. I do just love how God uses the everyday activities of life to speak to us. The high winds of February (if you can recall that far back) battered our gardens weekend after weekend. This loosened

all the old canes which no longer had a root system in the ground, making them easy to pull out. However, the canes with a strong root system were impossible to pull out.

I want to be one of these—impossible to pull out, no matter how hard the wind tries to batter me down.

This is a time when all our distractions have been taken away and we have an opportunity to become 'Berooted in Christ'.

My prayer is that we all grow deeper in our faith and trust to know God's peace and presence in our everyday lives.



MORE THAN A BLIP

by Rachael Laing Smith

When someone like Pete Greig says, *'Something is stirring in the UK. There, I've said it,'* you can bet we should sit up and take notice.



Pete and Sammy Greig, taken from Facebook

In his recent Facebook post, Greig goes on to say, *'I've hesitated to write this post. It's probably premature. We're still bang-slap in the middle of a vast crisis and no one really knows how it's all going to end. But here's the thing: over recent weeks, and particularly over this last week, prayers that some of us have been praying for decades, suddenly seem to be finding answers in the most unexpected ways.'*

Pete Greig, founder of the international 24-7Prayer movement, is well-known as a writer and speaker across the globe. His latest writing speaks of hope and answered prayer in a time of unprecedented crisis.

He draws attention to recent answers to pray, including the popular national blessing song which now has over 2.1 million views. On top of that, research commissioned by Tearfund suggests that over 3 million new people have

turned to prayer in the UK since the lockdown began. Sales of bibles have rocketed and requests for prayer resources soared.

Greig is by no means suggesting that these things are huge answers to prayer in and of themselves, but he does encourage us to see that they're an indication that **something is happening**.

Church attendance too has seen a massive leap. Where normal figures indicate that 5 to 7% of the national

population attend church, figures from this time of lockdown show that a huge 24% of the British population has been logging in to watch church services online. As Greig notes, *'And 5% of these people wouldn't normally be at church in, well...a month of Sundays! I've never known a time in my life,'* says Nicky Gumbel, *'when people are more open to [God's word] than they are now.'*

Cynics may say that all of this is just a blip, all these people who are now praying, reading bibles, and attending online church services will stop once this time of crisis comes to an end. And they may be right. But what if they're not. What if this *'pretty good blip'* is actually the start of something pretty real?

This was the headline in last Sunday's Guardian:

British public turn to prayer as one in four tune in to religious services

It seems even the media are catching on.

Greig concludes with this: *'My friends, this is a time to pray with greater faith, preach with greater confidence, and plan with great ambition. It's not everything but it's something. Let's dare to believe!'*

Login to Facebook and check out Pete Greig's profile to read the full article.

TEN MINUTES - 12 NOON - EVERY SATURDAY

WE'RE PRAYING

BIG

HOPE FOR HIGHWORTH

UNTIL THE END OF THIS CRISIS, THE CHURCHES OF HIGHWORTH

WILL BE ESPECIALLY PRAYING FOR YOU