

Greenways Benefice Weekly Devotional (No 5)

19 April 2020

The power of praise!

Acts 16:23-40

The Coronavirus lockdown has changed so much of our normal pattern of life as we know it. The government's restrictions to encourage social distancing is key to slowing down the spread of the virus. Statistics already show that such measures are helping to take pressure off of the NHS services. Staying at home according to the experts will protect the NHS and will ultimately save lives.

Although good and necessary, this advice in practice, feels very strange to us, not being able to spend time with our families and friends. We feel somewhat confined and perhaps frustrated at this moment, especially during this time of the year when we want to be meeting up and enjoying the good weather together.

In the book of Acts Chapter 16 we read that Paul and Silas were also confined for a time after being arrested and thrown into prison.

In Philippi Paul had cast a demon out of a female fortune-teller ruining the power that had brought a great deal of income for her slave owners.

After being arrested for this act Paul and Silas were both flogged, thrown into prison and secured in the stocks in a dark prison cell. It probably wasn't the way that they had expected things to turn out that day.

Interestingly they did not react in the way most people might by Complaining, becoming angry, blaming God, or giving into the fear of their imprisonment. Instead these two men began to praise God!

In the middle of the night, perhaps the time when anxieties can seem more real and magnified, they chose instead to pray and sing praises to God! And their praises prepared the way for heavens blessings to be released into that cell.

The hymns that they sang were heard by all the other prisoners around about them. These two men had an infectious spirit that was not only attractive but carried with it a weight of certainty, and resourcefulness that was witnessed by the other prisoners.

It was during this time of praise that a strange miracle took place, the foundation of the prison was shaken, the doors and windows flew open, and everyone's chains came loose in that dark and dismal place.

What an amazing turn around!

Seeing this event unfold even caused the jailer and his entire family to become believers in the Lord, they went from prison to praise!

As we read this wonderful story it encourages us to see that God can use our prayer & praise of Him as a channel to unlock and transform the difficult circumstances we face.

Who knows what will happen as we pray and worship the Lord instead of giving into fear?

Who knows what new opportunities will open up at this time to lead people to know Jesus personally?

Who knows what will come out of this season of uncertainty we are in?

We can be certain that God does! - He is not the author of sickness, death and separation.

He is the God of life, healing and liberation!

A quote from: Dennis Ignatius

'When we lift our hands in praise and worship, we break spiritual jars of perfume over Jesus. The fragrance of our praise fills the whole earth and touches the heart of God

At this time let's follow the example of Paul and Silas and make prayer and praise our melody and heart beat for the nations, as we face this global pandemic.

We don't need to be the world's greatest singer to sing out our praises to God.

We don't need to be the greatest poet to write a line or two of praise.

We don't need to be the greatest artist to paint a picture of praise or the greatest dancer to offer our movement to God in praise.

So during this time when we cannot meet together in the usual ways lets discover new and creative ways to bring our praises to God that will change the atmosphere and bring the fragrance of Jesus. AMEN