

Henley-in-Arden Baptist Church
“Staying Connected” 7 – Sunday 3rd May 2020

Staying connected to God and each other while not meeting as church in the normal way

As we continue in these times, learning how to adjust, and trying to keep cheerful, we can dream a little, too, of when we might get back together in the building once more. It may seem a long way off still, but things won't always be like this. What would such worship look like for you...? [Do share any thoughts with me]

This week is the third of our series on the “I am” sayings of Jesus. Today, “I am the gate” (John 10:9) (The wider passage (John 10:1-10) details this more.



The gate in Jesus' illustration may not look quite like this one, but the point is being made that the way into freedom and good 'pasture' is through Him.

The contrast with the 'false shepherds' will be visited next week when we look at Jesus as the 'good shepherd'. For now, we just need to understand that entry into these 'abundant green fields' is through Jesus. As Christians we have been making use of this 'gate' for the whole basis of our lives. In Jesus we have salvation, which means tasting and enjoying wholeness of life now, not just eternal life for the future.

What might that mean in times of trouble and difficulty such as the global pandemic and the effects of lockdown? I think it means that the qualities of abundant life; of faith, hope and love, prevail even when the reality of suffering is all too evident. We have the wonderful privilege and gift of the Holy Spirit helping us and 'ministering' to our deepest needs. The love He gives is then reflected back to God and passed on to others in all sorts of ways. And it's all through Jesus.

Our quiz question today is as follows:

Which Christian leader said the following about his three-volume book called 'Jesus of Nazareth'? "This is my personal search for the 'face of the Lord'"

It's not me, of course (!), but what a lovely ambition to seek to get to know Jesus more and more.

Lord God, we thank You for Jesus and opening the gate of life for us. Thank you for all Your gifts of love and life itself. Help us to keep growing in our relationship with You, and to love you more and more.

Thank You that even in these difficult times, You are with us, and we can draw on the support and help You give. Thank You for the promise in scripture that “when I am weak, then I am strong”; that “Your power is made perfect in weakness”(2 Cor 12:9-10)

We pray for those making big decisions on our behalf. Lord, give them Your wisdom, we pray. Strengthen and protect our health workers and all those working in difficult circumstances – in this country, and overseas. Our hearts cry out for those in extreme poverty and in places where the infrastructure is poor. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Lord God, Your compassion is made fully known in Jesus. Hear our prayers for all those who are troubled or in distress; for the sick, for the vulnerable. Where we are afraid, please bring Your peace.

Thank You for the promise of heaven, and the prayer that Jesus taught the first disciples: “Thy kingdom come”

We pray to You in the name of Jesus, our saviour and friend.

Amen

Keep attending to yourself in mind, body and spirit; and let’s keep praying for each other as we are able.

Worship services on Radio and TV this Sunday include:

- Radio 4 8:10am Sunday Worship
- BBC1 10:45am Sunday Worship
- BBC1 1:15pm Songs of Praise

And finally, please do get in touch with me at any time

May God bless you with His peace

Mike

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Philippians 4:4-7

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice! ⁵Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.