

Henley-in-Arden Baptist Church

“Staying Connected” 23 – Sunday 23rd August 2020

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

I hope you are finding some space in the midst of everything, for some quality rest and refreshment; and that you know the encouragement of God’s strength with you through any difficulties you may be facing.

As the strange times continue - I was in a city shopping centre recently, and it felt quite deserted. Those of us who were there went about our business, face-masked up... you know the thing! - our focus this week is on the rest that God provides.

This is the idea of Sabbath, and the rhythm of life involving times for rest and replenishment. Rest, whatever it might look like, is good for the soul. And God has built it into the intended order of things, as a gift.

In the OT we see that one of the laws is the Sabbath. As we know Jesus got into trouble for not obeying the strictness of the law as some were interpreting it, but the principle is important.

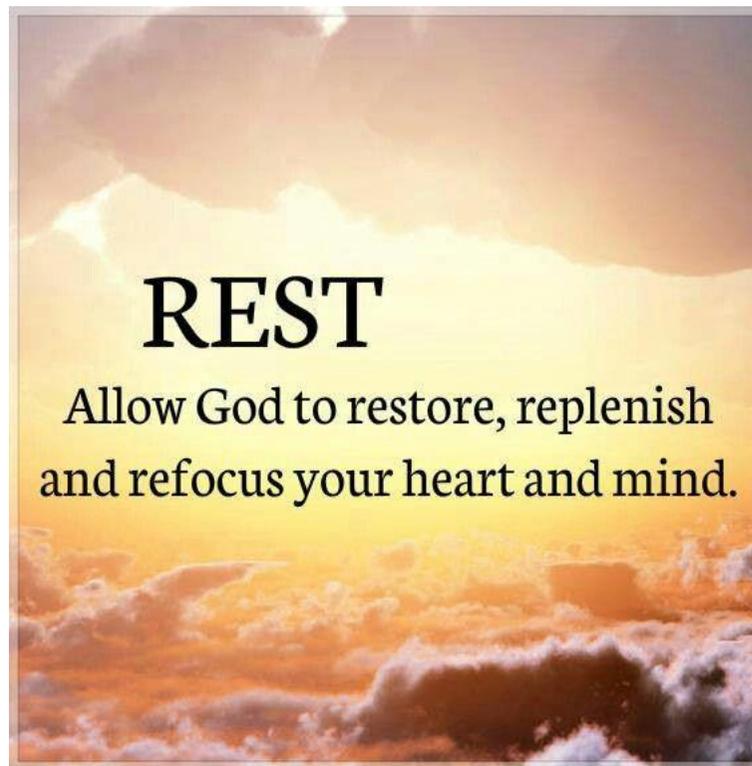
In Hebrews (chapter 4) we see that this concept of entering God’s rest is given new meaning: our true rest is actually found in Jesus – who gives us a peace even in the midst of our activity. This ties in with Jesus’ words to his followers on one occasion:

Matthew 11:28-30

²⁸“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

So, there can be rest even in work! But also, it is good to have time off for refreshment – or holidays

And of course, we can worship God in all these things



As you know, the plan is that in September, Kay and I will be moving on and saying our good byes. We will also be having some time off to rest a little.

There will be a further 'Staying Connected' next week (30th August) and then a bumper one on 6th September to cover the whole of that month. These last weeks will be filled with mixed emotion of course, and made more difficult by the restrictions we all continue to face. We will hope to say some personal goodbyes to as many of you as possible in due course; and will be praying, with confidence, that God will greatly bless you in the times ahead.

Lord God, our heavenly Father,

We thank You that You know what is best for us, and You make provision for all our needs.

We bring to You the needs of the world: for salvation, for wholeness in body, mind, and spirit. We pray for those suffering chronic, and acute, crises of all sorts. Bring Your help, we pray.

We pray this week for those in receipt of exam results, and especially for those anxious about the future... Bring Your peace, and be their inspiration, we pray.

Loving Lord Jesus, we thank You that you showed us Your Father's ways, and that we have these great records in four gospels. Give us hearts and minds to understand more of the great love that is Yours; and to put into practice what we have learned.

Holy Spirit, be at work in us and in the church, day by day:

Help us to "know You more clearly, love You more dearly, and follow You more nearly, day by day." Amen

For those not online, especially:

Worship services on radio and TV this Sunday include:

- Radio 4 8:10am 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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"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith"
Hebrews 12:2

Answer to last week's quiz:

The shortest of the four gospels is: Mark

The longest is Luke

(how many of you thought Matthew, I wonder?! – Luke has more words, even though Matthew is broken down into more chapters.

Contact me for a prize if you got it right (!))