

# KEEPING CONNECTED



22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020

**LET'S CONSIDER  
HOW JESUS IS OUR  
KING,  
REMEMBERING THAT  
OUR TRUE IDENTITY  
IS IN HIM AND  
THEREFORE WE  
NEED NOT BE  
AFRAID!**

**READINGS:**

**PSALM 148**

**PRAISE THE LORD!**

**ACTS CH24**

**PAUL'S TRIAL  
BEFORE FELIX**



## **PRAYERS**

*Father we thank you for a new day and that we can speak with you, hear the prayers of our hearts, especially those that we struggle to put into words.*

*Father we love you, we thank you for your Son, that he died for our sins and that his Spirit lives within us through our faith in his work upon the cross and by the mysteries of your grace.*

*We are sorry for our sins, all that we do and don't do that dishonours Jesus and makes our relationship with you less than it ought to be. Forgive us, help us to love and serve you and each other more.*

Take a moment to pray for NHS staff, those affected by coronavirus, vulnerable children who will miss the safety school affords them, the elderly and lonely, our government officials.

*'...to the only God our Saviour be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen' Jude v25*

## **CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY**

### ***What does a king have?***

Get a big piece of paper or card and get the kids to cover it with drawings of things a king would have- big palace, lots of food, servants, money etc. Let them really use their imagination to fill the whole thing.

### **Think about it:**

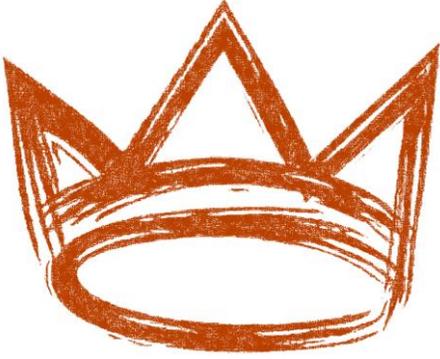
Would the king still be a king if he didn't have those things?

Is who we are based on what we have?

Is our identity just about stuff?

Jesus is not like any earthly king, he is the King of Kings. Jesus is a King because of who he is inside, not because of stuff he had. He is God's Son. Our stuff doesn't make us who we are, it's what's inside that counts. Do we love Jesus? If we do then that makes us God's children no matter what stuff we have or haven't got. Jesus will live in our heart by the power of the Holy Spirit and nothing can take him away from us, he is there always there, we can always talk to him, our friend and King

**Pray:** *'Thank you Father that Jesus is a greater King than any other. He is the King of Kings. Help us to live our lives not for stuff but for Jesus who promises to live in our hearts when we trust in him, Amen'*



## DEVOTIONAL

### ***Circumstances not of our making***

Paul found himself on trial, again facing persecution because of his proclamation of the Kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus is Lord and King of all was his message, not Caesar nor any earthly authority no matter how impressive. It's clear to see why many Romans had a problem with that but surely Paul could count on his fellow Jews to rally around him in shared mission, to tell the world that the Jewish Messiah had come and that Jesus was building a kingdom that all could belong to. Here was a message of hope and transformation that they could unite behind.

However that was not how the story unfolded, while many Jews received Paul's news with great joy, coming to follow Jesus as a result, many did not. Paul and his preaching were also treated with hostility, what he said challenged and threatened much of the earthly securities that the Jews had built up and they didn't like it. Jesus presented a new reality, or rather an old reality that had been somewhat lost, where people found their worth and purpose through faith and grace not by strictly following the law and having a better moral position in society than everyone else. Paul therefore was a nuisance, a problem to be gotten rid of, just like Jesus.

Even though he had broken no law, the Jews engineered that Paul be arrested and eventually he ends up before the Governor Felix. Paul had every reason to be bitter, to be angry and broken by the circumstances that now enveloped him, yet that is not the person we see in our reading. Acts ch24 shows a man who speaks boldly and confidently about Jesus despite the unpredictable situation he faces. Paul had this confidence because he knew that while the future appeared grim and all seemed lost in an earthly sense, Jesus was still King, judge and redeemer and therefore he need not fear.

We may not be imprisoned, nor face the persecution some of our brothers and sisters know too well, yet due to circumstances, not of our making, we find our freedom somewhat curtailed. Attending Sunday worship, perhaps something we have too long taken for granted, is now off the cards as are many of the pastimes that give shape and colour to our lives. It would be all too easy for us to succumb to fear, anger and bitterness, to see nothing but the challenge and difficulties that lie ahead, yet we are prompted to remember that our securities are not truly found in earthly things. Unlike the hostile Jews we can find freedom and joy in the fact that our worth and purpose is in Jesus, the King of Kings, he who is greater than any foe.

We are not forsaken, we are not left alone, on the darkest and loneliest of nights call to mind Jesus who has promised to be with us always, he will lead us through this valley. The darkness will not endure, for that which binds us together is greater, we are subjects of the King, rallied and united in identity and purpose to see the sunrise.

***Jesus shall reign where'er the sun  
does its successive journeys run,  
his Kingdom stretch from shore to shore,  
till moons shall wax and wane no more.***

***Let every creature rise and bring  
the highest honours to our King,  
angels descend with songs again,  
and earth repeat the loud amen.***

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### CREGAGH KEEPING CONNECTED

Each Friday morning I will email out an update like this one, which will include a devotional, children's activity, prayer points and readings. These can be hand delivered or posted if necessary if you hear of anyone who is not receiving a copy, or if you know of someone outside of our congregation who might benefit from receiving one please let us know.

### PRAYER

The fortnightly Prayer Link will be sent out again from next week, if you have any prayer requests please pass them on, if you do not receive the Prayer Link but would like to via email or printed copy please let me know

### OPEN CHURCH

The church will be open for private prayer on Fridays 10am-12noon, please feel free to come, following all necessary social distancing practices. I will be available during that time. Those who have signed up for vestibule duty are not required to be there. There will also be printed copies of this update available on the coffee bar for anyone who might find them useful.

### BIBLE STUDY

If you would be interested in being part of a Skype Bible study group during this time of church closure please email me.

### GIVING

While financial giving is not the priority at this time a number of folk have asked about it. Each Friday from 10am-12noon a box will be available outside my office where envelopes can be deposited. Also feel free to post a cheque to the church, envelope addressed to me if that is easier. If you would like to take this opportunity to think about changing to Standing Order please contact Gordon Dunlop to chat about how that would work.

### GET IN TOUCH

As I stated in letter that was sent around the congregation, please do not hesitate to get in touch if I can be of any help whatsoever, if you need messages or even if you would just like a chat.

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If you would like to receive this update by email please contact Robert on [rmcnair@compuserve.com](mailto:rmcnair@compuserve.com)