

KEEPING CONNECTED 5

19th April 2020



LET'S CONSIDER HOW
JESUS CAME TO SAVE
HIS PEOPLE FROM
THEIR SIN. TODAY
REMEMBER HIS
SAVING POWER AND
THAT IN HIM WE FIND
HOPE AND STRENGTH

READINGS:

PSALM 34

I WILL EXTOL THE
LORD

ACTS CH27 V27-44

SHIPWRECK!



PRAYERS

Dear God, Thank you for your amazing power and work in our lives, thank you for your goodness and for your blessings over us. Thank you for your love and care. Thank you for your sacrifice so that we might be saved and have freedom and life. Forgive us for when we don't thank you enough, for who you are, for all that you do, for all that you've given. Help us to set our eyes and our hearts on you afresh. During these difficult days renew our spirits, fill us with your peace and joy. We give you praise and thanks, in Jesus' Name,
Take a moment to pray for NHS staff, key workers, those affected by coronavirus, vulnerable children, the elderly or lonely, our Prime Minister and government officials, our families and friends, the world and church near and far- lift to God the people and places that lie heavy upon your heart

for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Romans ch10 v13

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY

Call the lifeguard!

Find a piece of paper or card, big if possible! Spend time drawing a beach scene- try and space it out so the top half of the page is beach and the bottom half of the page is water. Think about all the things that there could be on the beach or in the sea, allow them to really use their imagination! Once the scene is complete, from another piece of paper, draw and cut out little people, one for each child, as well as an extra one. Let the children take their little person to the beach, what fun could they have? Make sure they swim in the sea!

Think about it: The world is like this beach, full of fun and lovely things but left on our own we can love the world and the stuff in it too much and find ourselves in danger. (Put the little person in the sea) It's fun to swim in the sea but if we stay in too long, or stray too far we find ourselves in trouble.

◆ If we were in trouble at the beach what would we do?

Call for the lifeguard! Help! (use the extra little person to make a rescue!) When we love the world too much, we sin and sin puts us in danger. Yet if we call for 'Help', Jesus will rescue us from our sin and lead us to see how to love God and enjoy the world in a way that doesn't cause harm to us or others. Sin puts us all in danger, we all need saving, but Jesus has promised that he will come to our rescue when we call to him for help **Pray:** *'Father, thank you for Jesus, thank you that because he died and rose again, he defeated sin. Thank you that he can save us from sin and the danger that sin puts us in. Help us to trust in Jesus and give us the strength to live life in a way that shows you and the world how grateful we are for a lifeguard like him. Amen*



DEVOTIONAL

Grace in the wreckage

It has been said that the famous hymn *Amazing Grace* is John Newton's spiritual autobiography in verse. In 1725, Newton was born in London near the Thames. Both his parents were people of faith and his mother had hopes that John would go into the ministry. However the six year old Newton lost his mother to TB and was raised, while his father was at sea, by an emotionally distant stepmother as well as abusive boarding school masters. At

the age of eleven, he joined his father on a ship as an apprentice.

Newton began a pattern of coming very close to death, examining his relationship with God, then relapsing into bad habits. As a sailor, he denounced his faith, he later wrote, reflecting upon that time in his life, *"Like an unwary sailor who quits his port just before a rising storm, I renounced the hopes and comforts of the Gospel at the very time when every other comfort was about to fail me."* After various short lived sea fearing jobs, the insubordinate Newton began a career in slave trading. He often openly mocked the captain by creating obscene poems and songs about him. His disagreements with several colleagues resulted in his being starved almost to death, imprisoned while at sea, and chained like the slaves they carried. He was himself enslaved and forced to work on a plantation in the British colony Sierra Leone near the Sherbro River. While aboard the ship Greyhound, Newton was considered one of the most profane men the captain had ever met. In March 1748, while the Greyhound was in the North Atlantic, a violent storm came upon the ship that was so rough it swept overboard a crew member who was standing where Newton had been moments before. After hours of the crew emptying water from the ship and expecting to be capsized, Newton and another sailor tied themselves to the ship's pump to keep from being washed overboard, working for several hours. Newton turned and said, *"If this will not do, then Lord have mercy upon us!"* About two weeks later, the battered ship and starving crew landed in Lough Swilly, Ireland. The memory of his own *"Lord have mercy upon us!"* uttered during a moment of desperation in the storm did not leave Newton; he began to ask if he was worthy of God's mercy or in any way redeemable. Not only had he neglected his faith but directly opposed it, mocking others who showed theirs, deriding and denouncing God as a made up myth. He came to believe that God had sent him a message and would begin to work through him, this was most definitely true as he went on to exercise a profound and affective ministry for Christ.

How many sailors, in a similar way called out to God, on that ill-fated ship upon which Paul was a passenger? Due to his testimony now many, in their hour of need called out for salvation? As all made it to the shore, some swimming, others clinging to wreckage did they see, as Newton did, that they physical being saved from the wreck and the waters was a symbol of the great need of spiritual saving from the dangers and desolation of sin? Did they find the wonders of grace, that undeserved favour of the Lord, that gives life to the lifeless, hope to the hopeless, direction to the lost and comfort to the broken. In the midst of this wreckage that we find ourselves in, as we look for safe shores, some of us swimming, some of us clinging to driftwood, we await our safe landing and the rebuilding that must take place. Yet I wonder might we sing, as all good seafarers do, the words of Newton's being also ours, for when we called Jesus heard and his promise is one of salvation from sin and help to meet the challenges that face us. If you have never called upon Jesus, I urge you to do so, so with one accord the words of a profane sailor turned man of God would echo in each of our hearts:

***Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.***

***Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.***

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 this incoming 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.

BIBLE STUDY

If you would be interested in joining our Zoom Bible study group please email me. We meet on Mon evenings at 7pm, however another time can be arranged, or another group formed if required.

MESSAGE FROM CHURCH TREASURER

Some of our members have expressed an interest in contributing to church funds via bank transfer/standing order. To date, 40 members are contributing to WFO in this way, and 30 to the Building Fund.

Despite the church's temporary closure, the General Fund is still incurring approximately 75% of our normal expenditure and the continued support of individual church members is therefore very much appreciated. If you have not already thought about giving by this method, please give it your consideration. However no one should feel under any obligation to do so. Cregagh has sufficient reserves to cope with our temporary closure.

Please note that, if you decide to make a bank transfer or standing order, it is important that you are identified by your name and also, preferably, by your WFO number on the church's bank statement. If you contribute to the Building Fund or CPC Missions, I would also commend doing so by this method. If you prefer, please consider sending a cheque to me by post at 5 Ardenlee Avenue BT6 0AA (for either WFO or Missions). Cheques for the Building Fund may be sent to Richard Molyneaux at 14 Meadow Way, Crawfordsburn BT19, 1JJ.

Bank details are available from me (at 90453829 or 07513596531). Take care and keep safe- Gordon

THANK YOU!

We want to say a big thank you to children and young people for contributing beautiful pictures (two of which are attached today), prayers and poems that we soon hope to distribute around members of the congregation- if there are any more please send them in, the more the merrier!

GET IN TOUCH

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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