

REEMERGING TOGETHER 4

14th June 2020

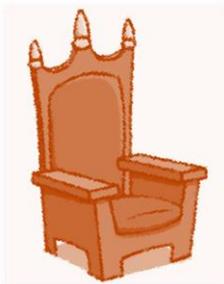


THE KINGDOM OF GOD WILL ENDURE FOREVER. WHILE IT MAY LOOK SMALL IN COMPARISON TO THE MIGHTY AND FRIGHTENING THINGS OF TODAY'S WORLD, IT WILL REMAIN BEYOND THEM, MORE WONDROUS THAN ANYTHING THAT HAS GONE BEFORE

READING:

DANIEL CH2 V24-49

DANIEL INTERPRETS THE KING'S DREAM



PRAYERS

Almighty God,

Your ascended Son has sent us into the world, to preach the good news of your kingdom: forgive us when we falter, stumble and sin, inspire us with your Spirit and fill our hearts with the fire of your love, so that many would hear your Word and be drawn to you, through Jesus Christ our Lord...

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

"The time has come," said Jesus. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

Mark ch1 v15

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY

A Throne that Doesn't Topple!! Stack cushions into a seat like shape in the middle of the room. **Think about it:** How many world leaders can you and the children think of? Make a list. Talk about the powers that they have, the things they can do but also the things they can't- No leader, no matter how strong, no kingdom or nation no matter how great can do everything nor can it last forever.

Do it: Take turns to sit on the throne and say what you would do if you were 'King of the World', after each turn have a bit of fun (carefully!) pushing the throne down! ♦ Every kingdom and nation

on earth will change with the passing years, they will have different rulers, times that are difficult and times that are good, times when they are big players in the world and times when they are not. **Read: Luke ch13 v18&19** ♦ The Bible tells us that God is building a kingdom that will last forever, when Jesus returns he will bring it in all its fullness and those who have trusted in Jesus will be like the birds that rest in the tree, they will enjoy that place when all things are new and sin, sorrow and suffering are no more. Jesus also tells us that when we look at the world and see all its trouble and all the mighty and scary things that are around us we are not to lose hope. The kingdom looks like a tiny seed just now, and next to the big things in the world not very impressive but it will grow into a tree that will stand forever, long past everything else, a tree in which we can rest in because it has been planted and cared for by Jesus, the king who sits on a throne that doesn't topple! **Pray:** 'Thank you Father for your Son and for the kingdom you are building through him. When we see the powerful or scary things in the world help us to remember that Jesus will come again and bring that kingdom with him. In the meantime forgive us when we sin and help us when we are frightened and lead us to love you and our neighbours. Amen'



DEVOTIONAL

That Greater Kingdom

Daniel being confident of what God had revealed to him boldly interprets the king's dream. In the presence of a monarch who, only the day before had pronounced a death sentence on the wise men of his court for failing to do as he demanded. The interpretation ought not to have been pleasing to the king, as it pointed to the downfall of his empire, but in awe and wonder of what Daniel was able to do the mighty king fell to the floor in praise of the Jewish exile and the God in whose name he stood before him. Yet Daniel did not desire any praise for himself, he pointed to the Lord and gave all glory to him, saying to Nebuchadnezzar *'The great God has shown the king what will take place...'* The dream, its interpretation as well as its exact detailed meanings have been hotly debated by scholars but the overarching idea that it is expressing is clear for all to see.

Standing in the dream is a mighty statue made up of strong and impressive metals, yet having feet of iron mixed with clay, here is a wobbly statue at best. The figure is forcefully smashed by a rock cut from the mountain *'not by human hands'* and topples to the ground, falling into pieces. The overarching idea is simple yet powerful- kingdoms will reign, strong and mighty in appearance but their foundations are weak- God's kingdom will come in power and glory, from the height of the mountain, not made by man and will end all earthly dominion before ruling as an everlasting kingdom.

While not for one minute would I ever wish to downplay the great suffering that coronavirus has, and continues to cause for many people, and it is clear that there is still a long way to go before life is back to normal, with more challenges perhaps to come, it has been interesting to watch the latest developments. For so long we have been fearful of the future, with projections of deaths in Northern Ireland in the thousands and talk of lockdown continuing for a year or even longer. Lately we have been given cause to cautiously hope and while there is still much we would like to see improve, there is no doubt that little by little, one step at a time we are moving in a much better direction. The coronavirus may not be a kingdom or a nation but in its own way it is like an enemy force seeking to cause us harm, yet while it has been deadly and dangerous it has not caused the devastation many of us feared it would. Just like the mighty statue, that had the appearance of unconquerable power and unlimited force, its foundations were brittle and its weakness exposed.

God's kingdom, the Bible tells us has both *'come and is coming'* in other words when Jesus came he brought it, yet he is still to return with it in all its fullness. On that day it will come in power as the Messiah appears, not as a babe in Bethlehem but as a mighty king in fire and angels. Through Christ it will endure and that gives us much to hope for as we long for that final day but also find strength in the days that lead to it, knowing that our hope is not in that which is fleeting but in that which is sure and steadfast, the rock which will conquer and stand victorious and unchallenged as King of Kings. Nebuchadnezzar when confronted with the wonder of God as he lay prostrate upon the floor declared *'Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings...'* In the coming days as we continue to take the threat of coronavirus seriously, while we act with caution and with sensible heads, may we refuse to be those who live by fear, but those who live in hope. Reemerging as a family of believers called to take our place in the Kingdom of God, as we do so we are prompted to look to Jesus and see in him a greater power and strength than that of any government, monarch or enemy, to see our brother and friend who is also our Lord and King, he who came to show us the kingdom, he who lives within us explaining the kingdom and he who will come again to bring it in all its glory.

***Come, O long-expected Jesus,
born to set Your people free!
From our fears and sins release us,
Christ in whom our rest shall be.***

***Born Your people to deliver,
born a child and yet a king;
born to reign in us for ever,
now Your gracious kingdom bring.***

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CREGAGH REEMERGING TOGETHER

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.

OPEN CHURCH

The church building will be open on Monday 10am-12noon, 6-8pm and Fridays 10am-12noon for private prayer. A one-way system, social distancing and hygiene procedures will be in effect. The facility to drop off church envelopes is also now available during these times. During Monday evenings and Friday mornings the organ will be played for a time.

PRAYER

The fortnightly Prayer Link will be sent out 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.

BIBLE STUDY

If you would be interested in joining our Zoom Bible study group please email me. We meet on Mon evenings at 7pm.

GARDEN CHAT OR VISIT

If you would like to 'book in' for a socially distanced chat in the side garden of the church on a Tues or Thurs afternoon please contact me, individuals or groups of up to nine people are very welcome. Also if you would like a socially distanced visit in your own front garden, I am conducting these on Wed afternoons, please get it touch.

LOOK WHO'S TALKING

Over the past 12 weeks we have been showing you the artwork that many of the children in the church have sent in, but now it's time for a bit of a change. For the next couple of months we have a new feature called 'Look Who's Talking!' which is an attempt to get to know the children in our church just that bit better and see how they've been coping with these unprecedented times. Each week we hope to highlight two of our children from KidZone and tell you a bit more about them. We hope you enjoy this brief insight into their lives. Karen McCurry

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.