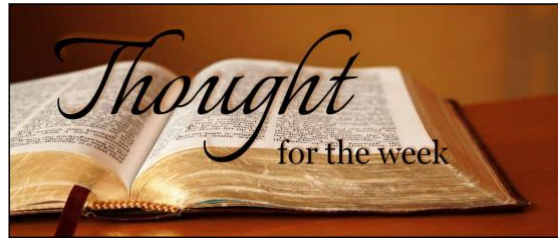


Greetings: I hope that you are enjoying the weather...

You may have heard that we are able to recommence our church services again.



This is great news, and although things will not be the same, at least we can open the chapel and hold some meetings etc.

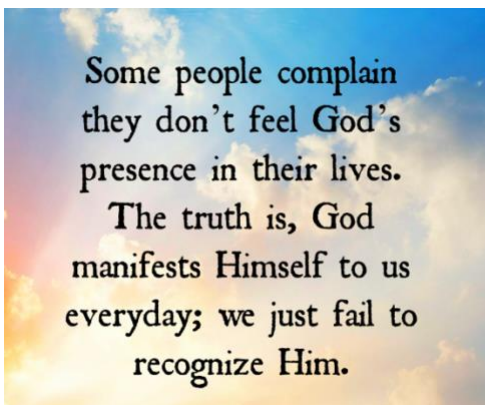
This lockdown has been difficult for many, especially for those who have been ill, separated from loved ones, -even at the end of life- and families who live in cramped accommodation etc. Social and domestic abuse is on the increase with many charities reporting an upsurge in referrals.

This is not over yet and we will be living and adapting to this virus for many more months ahead, until we can get a vaccine, or at least a medicine or something we can take to alleviate the symptoms.

But for some this has been a time of reflection and possibly even on occasion for assessing where we are. And I am no exception in this.

You may know the account of Solomon (1 Kings 5:1-6:38) who began to build the great Temple in Jerusalem. The king of Tyre allowed the wood from his forest to be used for building materials. In order to keep family ties strong, Solomon rotated the workmen so that only one-third of the workforce lived away from home at a time. During the Temple construction, God reaffirmed to Solomon the promise he had previously made to David. It was predicated on Solomon complying with the Lord's laws and commands. In other words, provided Solomon followed God, then there was an ongoing fruitful partnership.

During my study time, I realized once again that it's a wonderful day indeed when we stop working *for* God and begin working *with* God. (Go ahead, read the sentence again.)



For years, even in ministry, I viewed God as a compassionate CEO and my role as a loyal sales representative. He had his office, and I had my territory. I could contact him as much as I wanted. He was always a phone or text away. He encouraged me, rallied behind me, and supported me, but he didn't go with me.

At least I didn't think he did. Then I read 2 Corinthians 6:1: "*We are workers together with God.*" Workers with God? Co-labourers? God and I working together?

Imagine the paradigm shift this truth creates. Rather than report **to** God, we work **with** God. *Rather than check in with him and then leave, we check in with him and then follow.* We are always in the presence of God.

We never leave 'church'. There is never a non-sacred moment! His presence never diminishes. **Our awareness of his presence may falter, but the reality of his presence never changes.**

Might you, do you, desire to commune with God on a regular basis?

My life's experiences, -both as a Pastor and fellow follower of Jesus -show me that He is always available. Partnership works.

As we look forward to the remainder of the year, there will be challenges for all of us. There will be compromise and co-operation needed, 'normal' will not be normal anymore.

What can you do today and the remainder of this coming year, to perhaps remind yourself of God's constant presence? What might you be asking for?

I like that story about the fellow who went to the pet store in search of a singing parakeet. Seems he was a bachelor and his house was too quiet. The store owner had just the bird for him, so the man bought it. The next day the bachelor came home from work to a house full of music. He went to the cage to feed the bird and noticed for the first time that the parakeet had only one leg.

He felt cheated that he'd been sold a one-legged bird, so he called and complained. "What do you want," the store owner responded, "a bird who can sing or a bird who can dance?" ...

Sometimes we need to strip away all the dross and layers and be honest with yourself and with God. Pray fully, seek his face and ask of Him your hearts desires and needs.

A heart renewed — a loving heart — a penitent and humble heart — a heart broken and contrite, purified by love — that and only that is the rest of men. Spotlessness may do for angels, repentance unto life is the highest that belongs to man.

(Frederick William Robertson)

But be honest and have a Penitent heart...A person who is the owner of a penitent heart is a person who truly, and deeply regrets sinning; or rather expresses the feeling of regret, and has a heaviness of sorrow for having committed sins or misdeeds; unlike the rest of the vast majority of people who have pleasure in committing sins without any affect whatsoever. For the

one who does in fact possess this penitent heart; possesses one of the gifts that God has given to His child as a blessing, so, that when one returns to Him: will assuredly be treated as a son of God ([Heb.12:4-7](#)).

Are we glad that God says no to what we want and yes to what we need? *Not always.*
If we ask for a new marriage, and he says honour the one you've got, we aren't happy.
If we ask for healing, and he says learn through the pain, we aren't contented.
If we ask for more money, and he says treasure the unseen, we aren't always pleased.
When God doesn't do what we want, it's not easy. *Never has been. Never will be.*

But faith is the conviction that God knows more than we do about this life and he will get us through it. "J Corrie ten Boom used to say, "*When the train goes through a tunnel and the world gets dark, do you jump out? Of course not. You sit still and trust the engineer to get you through.*"...

We need to hear that God is still in control.
We need to hear that it's not over until **he** says so.
We need to hear that life's mishaps and tragedies are not a reason to bail out.
They are simply a reason to sit tight.

Next time you're disappointed, don't panic. Don't jump out. Don't give up.
Just be patient and let God remind you he's still in control.

It isn't over till it's over. Be Blessed and be a blessing...

(P.S. A dead parrot is a poly-gone!)

The very best I ever wrote told of the Chosen Few!
I preached about God's antidote, salvation just for you!

One-night God filled me with His love! God's light began to glow!
Back then I couldn't write enough, wise words were bound to flow!

With barely a title started, somehow it said it all:
'It's only the broken-hearted that love attempts to call.'

The verses came like thunderbolts, as if they couldn't wait!
As if each stored a million volts and I'd unlocked a gate!

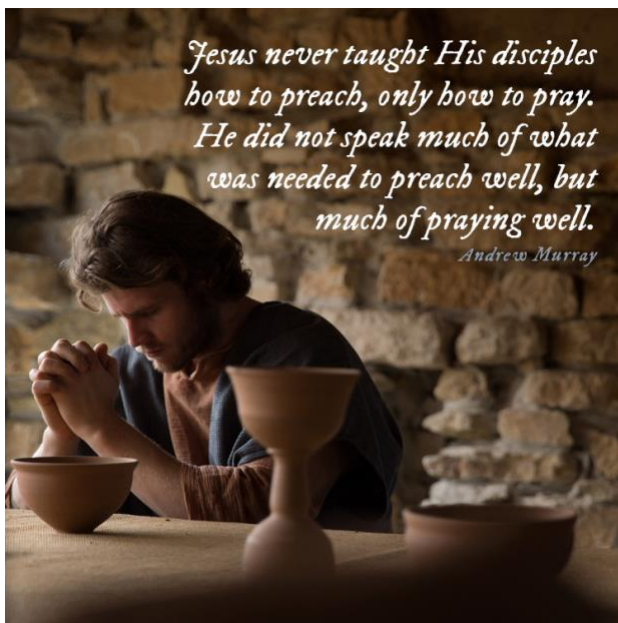
They charged on through and energised each thought I sought to share.
I'd seen the Cross of Jesus Christ! Visions beyond compare!

One thief believed the King of Kings... the other mocked and died.
The first had found the peace God brings, when pride is crucified.

Love cannot call a heart of stone nor draw the icy soul...
Love only calls to Calvary's own who ache to be made whole.

The humble heart cries out to God and prays till it is heard...
One day it learns Christ shed His blood! It's written in God's Word!

The visions helped me in my quest to preach for all I'm worth!
I learnt God gave His very best... for every soul on Earth...



Thank You Father for this new day. Today we are determined to rejoice in You. Father it is our desire to live our lives in a way that is pleasing to You. Help us Father. Help us to know, to see, and to live our lives according to Your Word and Your will. Father we need You. We are coming to You today asking that You help us.

Heal us Lord. Heal this land. Father we pray that You strengthen us and that You bless us. Make a way for us as only You can.

Father we need You. We need You to open up the windows of heaven and to pour us out a blessing. We need Your peace, your love, your joy to flow through us richly. Father we need You. Father we surrender our lives to You, and we ask that You do for us, in us, and through us what only You can. Father use our lives for Your glory in Jesus name ... Amen.