

## **Hannah's Reflection 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2020**



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### **The New Life of the Apostles – Living in Community**

Today's reading resonates so much with me at this time. Where we are having to not go to our wonderful Churches to pray and meet with God, but we are having to find new ways – pray at home, in the garden, on a dog walk, while doing the ironing, while building Lego or colouring in a picture.....God can be found everywhere we are, everywhere our heart is.

A church is not just a beautiful old building in a village.....Church is where your heart is, your faith is and those you care for are.

#### **Reading - Acts 2:42-47**

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

#### **Reflection**

There is so much in this short text to reflect on!

Have you ever experienced something so awesome, that you just cannot wait to share it with others?! The giddy feeling you get in your body, the fast almost uncontrollable retelling of the event, the biggest smile – that goes from one side of your face to the other as you do?!

For those that know me, you know just how excited I get at things – and how I love to share my experiences, feelings and adventures!

Well I'm sure that is how the disciples must have felt, when they saw Jesus – risen from the dead – back within their company. For 40 days they were able to be with him once more, to hear all of his plans and thoughts, to be able to learn from his teachings and become prepared to share all of this with the world!

After those precious days, Jesus left them once more – but they weren't alone for long as he sent down the Holy Spirit at Pentecost to his disciples – and for the first time the Holy Spirit actually dwelled within people.....wowzers! Now that would have been a pretty awesome event!

So excited by all they had experienced, they could wait no longer - they started to go out and share the wonderful news of how Jesus had died and rose from the dead and that by doing this he had paid the high price for the sin of humans. They went on to share the vision Jesus had, how he wanted to welcome others into God's Kingdom so that they too could share the wonderment of a relationship with God.

If we think back to the reading, it tells of the early church. It is fair to say that it didn't look much like our church buildings that we congregate in. That is because, the early church was not about a building....it was about a community, a community of people to whom believed in and followed Jesus. They loved God and they loved each other. This early church was so important, in spreading Gods blessings to others – that the early church continued to grow.....*'every day the Lord added to their number'*.

God uses the church today for the same purpose, and especially in these strange times – we are echoing the early church in all its glory!!

So the reading shows how, all those many years ago, the early church cared for each other when they found themselves in most need. This is so poignant to me for the strange time we are currently facing, as we try to reach out to those more vulnerable than ourselves.

We have had to overcome the fear of being faced with a virus, unknown to us, and to come together – whilst not actually being together - in a strength, found through faith in the steadfast nature of God. To show loving community by giving a little extra of ourselves, offering a sense of calm and stability to those in need. Now, I am not suggesting by any means that anyone should go and sell their property and possessions, as the disciples did!! But by giving time, making a phone call, listening, chatting, laughing together. Seeing if anything is needed from the shops. Within our homes baking a cake, a loaf of bread (*'They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts'*). These small moments of sharing and affection show a praising to God. Living out Jesus' values. They bring God into the lives of those we reach out to, and in turn enrich our own lives too.

The overwhelming feeling of devotion that the disciples showed made me think of how people are responding today. We see the devotion of people to their jobs – the keyworkers - giving their all to help support, care and provide for communities. We see how communities have come together – neighbours, to whom were unknown have been discovered and new links forged.

***God uses his church, in whatever form in may take,  
to spread God's blessing!***

### **Music**

What a friend we have in Jesus – Lucy Gibson (attached)

I vow to thee my country – Festival of Remembrance 2011

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bvouc8Qs\\_MI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bvouc8Qs_MI)

The Blessing – Cody Carnes:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VZJFHh93FGc&feature=youtu.be>



***Let's prayer together and ask that God will show us ways each day to love others and spread blessings to them!***

### **Intercessions**

In our thoughts Lord we bring to you our prayers...

At this time when we are facing such unknown difficulties, we thank you for always being there alongside us.

Even though our church doors have to remain closed at this time, we pray still to you, knowing, just as your early church did – that our prayers are always with you and with those in need.

Lord, hear us:

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

We lift to you our Lord, all of those working so tirelessly at this time to overcome the virus and its devastating effects.

Those who are exhausted and who carry the grief of the experience and loss around them.

Those trying to ensure a sense of normal can be felt.

Those ensuring supplies are continuing to be produced and distributed.

Those who have adapted and restricted their lives to protect one another.

Those who are giving time and resources to care for one another.

Lord, hear us:

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

We pray for those who are struggling in mind, body and spirit.

Those in hospitals, hospices and care homes.

We lift to you those for whom we pray....

We pray for the recently departed....

For families and friends trying hard to cope with the loss of their love ones.

We remember before you those whom we have loved and look to see again in your glorious kingdom....

Draw us close we pray.

Lord, hear us:

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

### **Blessing**

May the Lord bless us and keep us under the shadow of his wing. Amen

### **Scattered Blessings – A Fun Activity!**

In my back garden, I have at the moment, the most glorious trees in full blossom!



But I get so sad that these blossoms don't last for long, the same happens in the autumn when the leaves gently glide down onto the ground and the trees starts to look bare. In this moment of sadness, I have to remind myself just what is happening! As those leaves fall to the ground, so do the seeds - that make it possible for new trees to grow. So if our beautiful trees never gave up their leaves and seeds, we wouldn't have new trees to watch grow and enjoy.

The giving that we are all showing at this time is a lot like these trees. Every time that we give, we scatter our blessings to others and in turn, those people go on to bless others and it, the blessing, keeps growing and blossoming!

Grab a piece of plain paper, some pens, paint or pencils and draw a tree surrounded by leaves and seeds. On the leaves write the gifts that God has given you – it may be singing, listening, drawing, smiling, cooking....anything goes! Gifts, that in turn you can give and share with others to bless them with too.

And then, if you would like you can cut them out and throw them in the air, and try catching them too!! **Scatter your blessings! And be blessed!**