

*“<sup>9</sup> I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours.”*

The readings for today if you wish to read them are; Acts 1: 1-14, Ephesians 1: 15-23, 1 Peter 4: 12-14, 1 Peter 5: 6-11, Luke 24: 44-53 and John 17: 1-11.

### THOUGHT FOR THE DAY – EASTER 7

In the book of Acts we find that Jesus told his disciples that they had to wait. Waiting is something we learn to do; it can be hard, and we know how hard it is at the moment when all we get is wait. We have to wait patiently for the lockdown to finish or ease off so that we can go out, but the disciples were also under lockdown, a spiritual one, they had to wait on Jesus' promise. For us today Jesus' instruction to wait was not just for his disciples then but it is also for us modern day Christians. Jesus actively encourages us to wait for the promises of God to come to fruition in our lives. This means for the believer, the man and woman of faith that we must listen for what He is telling us to do through His Word and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We must not try to go off on our own thinking we know what it is He wants us to do, we must not go running off ahead of God and end up doing something that was motivated by our fleshly desires. We see this too often in the news with people getting fed up with lockdown and going out and doing their own thing which in turn causes problems for the rest of us and extends lockdown because these foolish, selfish people end up spreading the Covid virus.

The disciples knew they did not have the power to go out and minister to the people, they knew that Christ had risen from the dead and had gone back to be with our Heavenly Father, but they knew that if they did not wait for God's anointing then they would not get or have power. But they trusted in Jesus' word and they waited for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

The disciples had a mind set of waiting, they went into their upper room to wait, and to wait and pray until God sent His Holy Spirit as Jesus said. Like the disciples we too should have that determined but patient attitude saying, “I am waiting on you Lord, in your time come, let your will be done.” Waiting on God indefinitely is hard for us to do, we are made to move and be active, we have so much energy to do God's work that it is hard to rest and wait, and when we do stop for a minute it is hard to even do that. Unfortunately too many people get fed up waiting on God, they pray to Him and expect Him to do what they want now, right this minute and expect Him to give them what they want little realising that God moves in His timing and knows what we actually need, not what we

want. The good news for us today is that even when we don't see something or feel that God is working, He is actually working without us realising it. As one of the preachers I read recently said "He is working mightily in our behalf". As Jesus said <sup>9</sup> *I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours.*"

Peter knew all about waiting and about how important we are to Jesus for he said to the people of the Ephesian church: <sup>15</sup> *For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people,* <sup>16</sup> *I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.* <sup>17</sup> *I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.* <sup>18</sup> *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people,* <sup>19</sup> *and his incomparably great power for us who believe.* Peter is reminding us of the hope that we have in and through Jesus for the future. Our hearts are at peace, for we know that God is with us, even through these hard times that we are currently experiencing, we know that He is with us. The hope that we have is that of eternal life, it is guaranteed for all who believe and the offer is open to everyone to come to Christ and be saved. When we accept and acknowledge Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour it is then that we gain possession of the Holy Spirit who then resides within us and it is then we gain the promised inheritance. Jesus tells us clearly how much we mean to Him by praying for us to God: <sup>10</sup> *All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them.* <sup>11</sup> *I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one.*

Peter reminds us that in times of trouble we may be persecuted or picked on because of our faith in Christ. But because we have the Holy Spirit within us we are protected from this abuse, from these trials because He the Holy Spirit is a spiritual shock absorber, it allows us to face terrible hardships such as persecution or Covid lockdown and all that goes with it. The road of life is a stressful one and an acutely uncomfortable one, but God softens the discomfort and actually comforts us in our periods of desolation or difficulty. Many people who do not serve God or believe in Him tend to look and act as if they have the world on their shoulders which they do, this wears them down and ages them. They can't cope,

they are stressed out, they are struggling mentally, physically and spiritually they are in a vacuum, they are empty inside. Whereas if they only believed and accepted Christ and served God and leaned on His Holy Spirit to guide and protect them, they would have found life a lot easier to bear, for Christ told us to lay our burden down at the foot of the empty cross and He would take it from us. Jesus told us to wait, but if only you ask Him, He will take away your burdens and problems. The disciples waited and went from being frightened, hiding out in a closed room to bold and fearless men and women of God for when the Holy Spirit of God comes upon you and lives within you, you can help others as God helped you. The current burden of lockdown can become your blessing and whatever weakness you may currently have can become your strength in and through the Lord. <sup>6</sup> *Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.* <sup>7</sup> *Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*

<sup>8</sup> *Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.* <sup>9</sup> *Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.*

<sup>10</sup> *And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.* <sup>11</sup> *To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.*

## PRAYER

Heavenly Father how long do we have to wait. We pray that You will be done, and we pray that Jesus comes soon. Waiting is hard for us and we need your strength to wait productively. There are many people Lord who need our prayers today, so we wait, and we pray. Guide our words always we pray, help us to know when and who to pray for and then let us wait knowing that you have heard and you will answer in your time. The bible teaches us Lord that your timing is perfect and you know what is best for us even though we may not realise it we know through our faith that you are working away on our behalf and for that we are thankful.

Cleanse, renew and uplift us today with the Holy Spirit so that we may be strong where others are weak. We especially pray for our brothers and sisters in the hospitals and care homes, in the emergency services and all those who are key workers, bless them we pray and keep them safe. For our ministers, priests and pastors, for all those who have faith be with them so that the power of fervent prayer will cover this land and bring people your peace. We pray in Jesus name for the healing of the nations and of the world, we pray for peace and for humility so that no one's selfish desires will overcome others need. Grant us wisdom we pray so that we can make the right decisions and so we pray for those in government and in our hospitals for this same wisdom and the courage and the strength to make them and carry them out. But help us to wait on you Lord and find our peace in and through the love of Jesus. Amen.