

Dear Friend

This morning it seems like all the April showers have been kept in storage and are now being sent all at once! The ground will certainly welcome the moisture and the sound of rainfall is beautiful. Yesterday we received a delivery of essential supplies, including vital things like ice cream and bananas - which are delicious together by the way! As I carried in the bags, the thought struck me that I could be bringing in to our home something that could do us great harm or even kill us. So I made sure Mary was behind a closed door and safe, donned my PPE - a pair of pink washing up gloves - according to government statisticians these count as two items of PPE, whereas there is a clue in the word 'a'! - and proceeded to wash everything that was washable in hot soapy water, and wipe un-washable items like cereal packets with antiseptic wipes, and then leave things like flour and sugar in our red quarantine zone - the spare room - for at least four days. Packaging, including the precious plastic bags I put straight into the rubbish which I then put immediately into our outside bin. Everything I had used was then washed again, finally I washed my hands for the prescribed 20 seconds - or it could have been 25, I was singing Happy Birthday and God's blessings on you quite slowly, before allowing Mary back into the kitchen to decide what - other than the ice cream, (I'm thick, but not that thick (!)) needed to go into the freezer. We have never had such clean fruit and veg until now!

I have written this in a light-hearted way, but of course dealing with Covid-19 is deadly serious. We shan't know for a few days if the precautions I took worked. But I'm doing my best not to think too hard about what might be. As a child of God, I do everything in my power to stay safe and to keep my loved ones safe, and I also trust in our heavenly Father to do what it is not in my power to do - to stop the virus from attacking us. Neither of these offers us a cast iron guarantee that we will remain healthy. But both Mary and I are determined to live each moment to the full, practising the presence of God, who promises his peace to those whose minds are fixed on him (Isaiah 26.3), living for today and leaving tomorrow in his hands (Matthew 6.34).

Our faith in God is not passive - we don't just do nothing and trust that God will work out his purpose as it were without us. God expects us to do everything we can to keep ourselves and others safe, as well as to share his love in word and deed, to pray like never before that as the fragile structures of the world are shaken so God's kingdom will be seen more clearly, and all who suffer will find the Lord in the midst of all they are going through. God has given us all we need to enable the church, including you and me, to grow spiritually and to thrive even in these dark days.

A quote from Brother Lawrence: Our biggest mistake is to think that a time of prayer is different from any other time. It is all one.

Verses for today:

[Jesus said:] Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?



Matthew 6.26-27

To help you smile on a rainy day both also sourced from scarymommy.com



What do you call it when one cow spies on another cow? A steak out!

And an appropriate joke for today:

*What happens when it rains cats and dogs?
You have to be careful not to step in a poodle.*

Mary and I have just shared in the minute of silence to remember our health workers who succumbed to this appalling virus; may each one rest in peace and rise in glory. Amen.

And may our loving Heavenly Father keep your heart in mind in perfect peace as you keep your heart and mind fixed on him - so may you know that our God is closer to you than your breath.

With much love and prayer

Simon