



7th February 2021

Dear Friends

There is light at the end of the tunnel. More and more people I know are having their first dose of the Coronavirus vaccine, and so the time when our lockdown restrictions will finally ease is inching nearer. One of the most difficult aspects of all this has been separation, which can be particularly painful. Not being able to give someone a hug, or even to meet each other. Some of us are meeting in church each Sunday, but we cannot 'mingle' over coffee afterwards like we used to. This unnatural apartness from one another is just a small glimpse of the pain God feels due to peoples' separation from him.

To live separated from God is to live in the gloomiest darkness. That is the greatest darkness there can ever be for humankind, living at a distance from God. Separated from Him because we fear his condemnation; separated from him because we are angry with him over someone's suffering that we do not understand; separated from him because of our own sinfulness. That is a pandemic infecting far more of the world's population than even Covid-19. And it is something people don't realise they suffer from until they are cured.

When my faith in Jesus came to life, in a moment everything looked different to me. It's not as though externally the world had changed, just my inner perceptions had. It was like a light was turned on in my life. What actually happened was I said to God, I haven't had a good enough relationship with you in the past, I'm sorry, and I want to have a personal relationship with you, a personal relationship with Jesus, and I want the Holy Spirit to come into me. A simple prayer, but God answered it! And I can tell you, it made everything look different!

Suddenly every word in the bible came to life, and it seemed as though every verse was speaking to me personally. I couldn't get enough of reading the bible. And worship in church was transformed – no longer was it something I did out of a sense of duty, instead it became something I *needed* – I would go into withdrawal if for some I hadn't been to worship God in Church with other Christians.

And prayer was also transformed. Beforehand, I was totally intimidated at the thought of prayer. I felt it was like writing some formula, and I needed to follow some rules that only the church knew. But afterwards, prayer became simply a day-to-day conversation with someone, a best friend, who is right there with me, wherever I am, whatever I do, every moment, throughout my life.

That someone is, of course Jesus Christ. As John wrote in his Prologue, he is the Word, who was with God from the beginning of all time, and through Him God created the whole universe. He is life and light for all people. The light shines in the darkness – whatever shadow experiences there are in people's lives; whatever dark thoughts keep you awake at night; whatever dark fears there are, are dispelled in the light of Christ.

Through Christ crucified, we have access to God, through his forgiveness. Through having that light shining in our hearts, we can know the deepest peace, the most profound healing, within and throughout our lives, even when in lockdown.

With love,

Tina Upton



NOTICES

Holy Trinity Blacon are the living church of our living God, and we continue to be at work here! If you are able, do check the parish website www.holytrinityblacon.org or our Facebook page (holylrinityblacon) for updates.

LOCKDOWN affects the whole country now, but fortunately we can still continue to meet (socially distanced) in church to worship together, and we will continue meeting at 9.30am each Sunday. The minibus is also running, so do let us know if you would like a lift.

PRAYING FOR BLACON Louise and Tina are taking our exercise particularly along those streets we are praying for each week. Do join us in praying for those residents. *This week we are praying for: Maitland Way, Lloyd Place, Roebourne Rise, Canberra Way & Adelaide Road.*

EVENING PRAYER We meet each Wednesday 5pm for Evening Prayer on Zoom. Do let us know if you would like the link – everyone is welcome to join us.

DAILY HOPE is a free phone line for hymns, prayers and reflections – 0800 804 8044

LENT begins on *Ash Wednesday 17th February*, when we will hold a service of Eucharist with ashing at 11am. On Sundays in Lent, there will be time of silent contemplative prayer in church from 11am. There is also a Lent Course run online on Thursday evenings, and a Stations of the Cross video – more information from our website www.holytrinityblacon.org

BLACON BEACON is a food charity for Blacon based in our church hall. Members pay a weekly contribution, and in exchange receive weekly bags of food. Donations are always welcome: food can be dropped off at the church on Sundays, or the hall during the week. For more information, please contact Kerry on 07851 870078.

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