



Are you Weak? I hope you are.....!

Greetings from the Emmanuel and St Paul's Coffee Lounge!
One of the more recent initiatives in maintaining our fellowship as the body of Christ at Emmanuel and St Paul's!
If you've not tried a 'Zoom' meetings on line yet you ought to do so if you can! Contact Tim Lyddon if you need any help!

One of the verses we are probably more familiar with from the book of Romans is,

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

It's found towards the end, in verse twenty-eight, of that glorious chapter eight where we have had to hold our breath for seven chapters before the grace and mercy of our Lord are finally revealed.

“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,”

It's a classic for preachers – always ask what a '*therefore*' is there for! It's there because we have had to learn a critical lesson in the first seven chapters – that we have no means by which we can commend ourselves to the Lord and *therefore* need to come before him in complete surrender, solely on the basis of our repentance and his mercy.

But it's not just about our salvation! Complete surrender means praying Jesus' 'Gethsemane prayer', "***Not my will but your will be done***" over *every* aspect of our lives if we are to know the ***full*** blessing and peace of "***...in all things God works for the good...***". If you take the time to read Romans 8 from verse one (and most of us have plenty of time on our hands to do so!), it's tremendously liberating. Sure of our confidence in Christ, that no ultimate harm can come to us, we are liberated to look for the Lord's blessing in every circumstance. Yes, ***every*** circumstance!

For that reason, I am delighted to commend Vera Michelle's testimony article. Surely, not many of us can ever have met such a positively minded person! But such apparent human strength, which most of us would say we could never muster ourselves, emanates only from the weakness of total surrender to Christ and his will. This in turn is generated from our growth in trusting our Lord as we witness '***his living and active***' power through the Scriptures which '***are at work in us who believe***'.

It's a lesson Paul had clearly learned, and it caused him to write in respect of a prayerful encounter with the Lord,

“...he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

I wonder if, in these unprecedented times, you, like me, find yourself being shaped and moulded by them under our Lord's hand? It does us good to reflect and meditate on such things – about how we are being made stronger in our weakness. I hope you're finding some time for that. Let's aim to invest more in our prayer-lives in this highly fertile season for Christian growth!

Rev Karl 22nd April 2020

The Life of Faith in Lockdown!

It is a joy and a privilege to share some experiences of life in lockdown. For me, a precious and unexpected consequence is knowing the presence of Jesus in a new, very real and meaningful way. I've had times of anxiety, fear and panic, but these have been comforted and quietened by trusting those things very deliberately to the Lord. I've then known His peace, and each time, practical help has confirmed that his promise is faithful and that he provides a way through. I am truly thankful to Him for His compassionate understanding and for the help of His people.

Since lockdown, the written Word of God has become increasingly alive to me.

Since I've been a member of God's family at Emmanuel, my faith has been strengthened by the faithful teaching of His Word and by the fellowship of the church family. I've learned that in order to thrive I need to be fed with the living Word of God and to worship him and pray with His people. I feared I would starve in lockdown, but the opposite is true. Eight nutritious meals a week instead of two! These have sustained my corporate life in Christ, and my personal relationship with Him has deepened, strengthened and become much more meaningful and joyful. Any relationship not nurtured will fade away and wither, but since lockdown my Joy and fellowship with Jesus has truly blossomed. I've learned I need to spend the day with Him. I need to be real with Him, not just the odd time of sharing, but to share all of it with Him. I need to be real with Him. Read Psalm 44:23-24 and Luke 8:22-25. When I feel like that, there is no point hiding it as a sign of weakness. He knows how I feel anyway. Read Psalm 139, verses 4 & 23.

The despairing and frightened rant itself changes my heart and it becomes a penitent heart-cry to my Saviour for His love and help. I've learned that praising and worshipping the Lord in spirit and in truth, before I ask for His help, strengthens my faith. I come with confident expectation instead of uncertainty and desperation. I've learned how much I need the Holy Spirit to help me take hold of the fulness of Jesus' loving, compassionate power. Read John 14:16-18 and 26-27. I need the Holy Spirit to liberate my spirit, heart and mind to Jesus, so I can receive him into my innermost being and know His fulness.

Since lockdown, the written Word of God has become increasingly alive to me. Many of the psalms Karl has read to us have been *my* feelings and thoughts, but also *my* affirmation of *my* faith and hope in *my* Saviour and Lord. It's the heart-felt, spirit-felt, Holy Spirit given affirmation of *my* faith which sustains me, enabling me to leave the things I cannot change in His will and hands. I can then face the day with His peace, joy and love to enjoy the things I can change: sorting out years of precious cards and letters which I wanted but knew I could not keep (there is a parable in there somewhere!); revelling in the colour, design and iridescence of tulips and bluebells; seeing life restored in my garden. His love, care and power are within all creation. Nothing in all creation, not even Coronavirus and lockdown is able to separate me from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus my Lord. I am safe in my Saviour. Thank you, Father God, thank you Lord Jesus, thank you Holy Spirit that you are the eternal God of love and that you love me.

For me, a precious and unexpected consequence is knowing the presence of Jesus in a new, very real and meaningful way...

Vera Mitchell



On Facebook You'll find¹:

9.00am 'Go Live' Bible reading, reflection and prayers every morning at 9.00am. You can add your comments or people's names for prayer during and after the 20 minutes or so together. The session will be available to enter just before the time advertised but not before.

10.30am on Sundays there is similar but extended time together.

Following 'Go Live', a pre-recorded puppet video is [released on Facebook](#) in summary of the Bible message - aimed at children, but....!

These gatherings remain on Emmanuel with St Paul's afterwards as videos and are also copied to our Website: Emmanuelplymouth.co.uk.

Our open Zoom events (All passwords are Godwithus)

- [A post 'Sunday service' coffee lounge from 11.00am](#)
 - Or from within Zoom, enter the ID: 813 7344 3619
- [A Fun Time for our Primary School age children every Monday at 4.00pm](#)
 - Or from within Zoom, enter the ID: 797-3839-6985
- [A meeting point for our secondary School age children every Tuesday at 4.00pm](#)
 - Or from within Zoom, enter the ID: 719 8763 3217
- [An open prayer room led by Rev Tony every Wednesday between 7.30pm and 8.30pm](#)
 - Or from within Zoom, enter the ID: 141 678 796
- [A coffee lounge, every Thursday between 10.30 and 12Noon](#)
 - Or from within Zoom, enter the ID: 775 6950 0994
- [An open, Early Bird Friday Prayer Room between 8.00 & 9.00am](#)
 - Or from within Zoom, enter the ID: 516055871

Home Groups are also meeting on Zoom as below. If you want to drop in and give one a try – you are sure to meet with friendly faces and encouragement in your faith!

Monday @1430 Linda Wheeler's Home Group. Meeting ID: 587 557 732

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/587557732?pwd=TnpUeG9CeXFBOG03Uy9xQVZEdXkyUT09>

Wednesday @ 2000 Steve Martin's Home Group Meeting ID: 775 6950 0994

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/77569500994?pwd=aCtDN1p5ZHJ6TU50Mjc4M0dvL0Yrdz09>

Thursday @1930 Mark Bullard's Home Group. Meeting ID: 777 9981 9736

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/77799819736?pwd=akZuQVNGQisySk1LUkNnL21ZbjFIdz09>

Thursday @ 1930 Mark Parkman's Home group Meeting ID: 819 7833 7129

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81978337129?pwd=aFF4S2NRYk5lc0cvRUNDOUhycm0xUT09>

¹ Either click the blue writing or Go to Facebook.com, then, in the top left window, search for '*Emmanuel with St Paul's*'