

Faith not fear: a message for Mothering Sunday

Exodus 2:1-10, Psalm 34

Dear friends,

I write this at a strange time. Mothering Sunday is here, traditionally the time when people returned to their mother church, but we cannot meet for services because of Coronavirus. When normally we would meet with our families, many face a period of isolation. Fear is around: fear for our health, for our loved ones, for livelihoods, for what the future holds. Our lives feel unfamiliar, and let's be honest, it's scary.

God speaks into our fear in our readings today in an amazingly relevant way. Why don't you take some time now to read both of the passages cited above for yourself and take your time to reflect on them? First, in the Old Testament, we have a poignant story of motherhood. Pharaoh, king of Egypt, has decreed that all the baby boys born to the Hebrews must be killed. When Moses is born, his mother hides him for as long as possible. But when she can no longer hide him she makes a basket for her baby and places him in the reeds along the bank of the Nile (Exodus 2:1-10). Can you imagine her fear? What would happen to her little boy? Would Moses live? Would she ever see him again?

Moses' mother must have felt she was doing a completely unnatural thing, in separating her son from his mother's love and protection. But, strange though it seemed, she did the right thing to protect him. When she could no longer keep the baby safe, God intervened in an extraordinary way. Moses ended up being raised in the palace of Pharaoh himself, raised by his own mother... and the rest is history.

It seems unnatural to us to be separated, too. Social distancing and self-isolation put a distance between the most fragile and vulnerable people and their families, churches and communities who should be caring for them. But like Moses, it is to keep them and us safe. It is the right thing to do for their protection and ours. Like Moses' mother, we must do all we can to help; but when we can't, we must trust that God will intervene and do the rest. He is "the same Lord, whose nature is always to have mercy." He cares. He acts to save.

Psalm 34 is traditionally believed to be written by David at a time when King Saul was pursuing him and trying to kill him. There was a man who had reason to fear! But listen to what he sings (verses 1-4):

I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips.
I will glory in the Lord; let the afflicted hear and rejoice.
Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt his name together.
I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.
Those who look to him are radiant...

Let's look at how David deals with his fear and see what we can take from it. In the passage above he does three things.

Firstly, he *praises* the Lord *at all times*. Not just when all's going well, but right there in the midst of his troubles. When we praise God, we declare that he is almighty. Nothing is beyond his power. Try saying this out loud, and mean it! "Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory!" Praising God reminds us that he is here, he is in control, he can act and intervene.

Secondly, he *seeks* the Lord. David is intentional about spending time with God. Some of you are going to have a lot of time on your hands in the next few weeks and months. Well, don't waste it! Spend some time each day reading the Bible, and praying. You might like to start with the Psalms. God speaks to us through Scripture and prayer, and as we seek the Lord, our fears decrease and our faith increases.

Thirdly, David *looks* to God, rather than looking at his terrifying circumstances. I know Coronavirus is scary. I know it can all feel overwhelming. But don't spend all day looking at the news, or on social media; it doesn't help. Turn it off and look to God instead. Try to have some quiet time with God and listen to what he has to say. My personal practice is to spend half an hour in the early morning with my Bible and my lists of people and situations to pray for. But find the spot in the day that works for you. Remember, our churches are open for personal prayer. I guarantee it will do a lot more good than worrying!

So friends, here's my message to you. Choose faith, not fear. Choose to trust God, like Moses' mother. Choose to praise the Lord. Choose to seek the Lord in prayer and Scripture; look to him rather than to the media. God is with us. He loves us, and he is in control.

Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with you all. (2 Thessalonians 3:16).

With love and prayers,

Cass

P.S. We will do our very best to keep in touch. If you have internet access, do keep an eye on our website www.penedeyrnmissionarea.co.uk for more messages, prayers and other resources. Facebook users, search for [Christ Church Bala / Eglwys Crist y Bala](#) or [Eglwys Cerrigydrudion Church](#). Twitter: [@Balaeglwys](#)
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