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Letters to the Church during COVID-19: 1 July 2020

To the Church Family at KBC,

I hope you are well and keeping safe as we begin to emerge out of lockdown. I have been living in the book of Ephesians this year during my devotional time. I have been reading it slowly and then re-reading it. Been meditating on various verses and savouring some incredible truths. Like the truth of our identity in Christ which is captured in the 'You are...' devotional series available on YouTube. And the verses I was chewing over this morning were yet another incredible encouragement to me. I will probably spend the rest of the week pondering and reflecting on them, applying them to the various situations I will find myself in this week.

The verses are Ephesians 5:15-20. Go on have a quick read and then have a slow read. What stood out to you and what was God's Word saying to you? Write that down in your journal. Here's what grabbed me, and I found a huge encouragement as we begin to emerge out of lockdown. Five things, nothing new and we have probably covered it in previous weeks but a great reminder non-the-less.

Be very careful how you live (vs.15)...never forget that we are in a battle (Ephesians 6:12-13) and that the devil prowls around like a lion waiting to devour me (1 Peter 5:8). We need to acknowledge that as much as the Father has a purpose for us, so does the enemy, only his is to steal, kill and destroy everything good thing that the Father is doing in us and through us. So be careful.

Make the most of every opportunity (vs.16)...and if we pay attention we will see that the opportunities are all around us. In short, an opportunity is a time or set of circumstances that makes it possible to do something. In this case, something for the Lord. Maybe it is offering a kind word to someone who calls, maybe buying a coffee for someone who is homeless, maybe looking to encourage a friend and maybe using some of that 'I'm bored time' to spend with the Father. Don't waste the opportunities.

Understand what the Lord's will is (vs.17)...and if you are not sure what it is in this season, then turn to 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 which spells out a good place to start. The season of lockdown has not changed God's will, He still wants us to be joyful, pray and give thanks. Perhaps, especially in a season of trial because it will be the perfect expression of us saying, 'Father in spite of all that is happening, I still trust you and know that you are good!' Understand God's will.

Be filled with the Spirit (vs.18)...and the verb 'to be' here is in the present continuous. Which means a better translation would be, "Go on being filled with the Spirit". This is also part of God's will for us. You may be wondering, 'why do I need to *go on being filled*' and the answer is simple - because we leak. Like a sponge that needs to be constantly dipped into the bucket to be filled with water, so we need to be constantly immersed in and filled with the Spirit. He, the Holy Spirit, is our Comforter in a discomfoting season, our Guide when the way ahead seems unclear and our Deposit guaranteeing our inheritance and anchoring our hope. So, be filled...again and again with the Spirit.

Always give thanks (vs.20)...always! And why? Because He is good, and His love endures forever. Our circumstances may have changed and will be changing more as we emerge out this season, but one thing remains certain. The Father is good, and He does not change. He alone is the one constant in our lives and will ever remain to be the one constant in our lives. So, count your blessings, name them one by one and you will see what the Lord has done and that you have ample to be thankful for. Give thanks.

It's great isn't it - such rich encouragement to keep us pressing on to take hold of that for which Christ has taken hold of us.

May you always find yourself firmly in His grip and know that I am praying for you.

With love in Christ
Stu

#KeepTrusting #KeepConnected #Call4Support

Notices and Upcoming events on Zoom:

Thursday: Monthly cooperate prayer meeting.

Friday: Children and Youth on line for those aged 11+ at 7pm.

Sunday: 10:30am, Sunday Morning Service (we will open the room at 10am for people to gather to chat and leave it open after the service for people to chat as well).

Sunday: 7pm, there will be a time of worship until about 8.30pm led by a few of us from the music group. It's very informal, but an opportunity to worship God in song.

KBC YouTube channel: Here you will find our new daily mini devotional series 'Therefore..' and back copies of Stu's daily devotional series 'You are....' and our sermons each week. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0lqZEJkxDYGSQCQCw6onJw/featured>

Resources: Do not forget to check out our resources page on our website, which is constantly being updated, including resources for families and activities for children and youth: <https://kingswoodbaptistchurch.co.uk/resources/>

SOLID Festival: for ages 7-17, Saturday 4th July 2020 from 10.30am to 4.30pm. Parents can book online at:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=ctNOBVshbU2MI_DMcdGwlmk_bhZM8pluRjB6yGr6QJUN1dFQ0U2UTZHMUVMSVXQVZJQlpZM1gwSCQIQCN0PWcu