

Margi's Muntsch

From: Margi Steiner

Date: Sat, 11 Apr 2020 at 11:04

Subject: Easter Saturday Muntsch

Good Morning!

Sometimes in our lives, we experience what theologian David Ford has described as 'multiple overwhelmings.'

Today, on Easter Saturday morning, I'm writing about multiple overwhelmings in context of the pandemic as we are all cope with the restrictions and the need to 'stay safe'.

And as we pray for the families bereaved by the disease and the loss of loved ones.

But what about Jesus' disciples and friends and his mother on that first Easter Saturday morning?

In the space of a week, they have been overwhelmed with a tumultuous reception for Jesus; a passover meal when he washed their feet; confusing (?) words as they Jesus broke bread and talked of his broken body, then poured wine and talked about his blood being poured out;

falling asleep when he asked them to pray; a scene of betrayal and arrest; denial of their friend and desertion of their Lord; unjust trials, culminating in torture, humiliation and a criminal's crucifixion. And a mother's broken heart.

Truly multiple overwhelmings.

What was their response? Mary was taken in by John and the others went off to hide.

Come with me now to the Island of Jersey; Ted's birthplace and where I went to meet my prospective in-laws, 49 years ago.

Our special place is the Lighthouse, La Corbiere – because we always wanted our home to be a lighthouse, shining out God's love.

At low tide, it's possible to walk along the slip to the lighthouse and look out to sea. At the bottom of the slip, on the landward side is 'our' rock.

A huge chunk of granite, which may be washed by the waves, but is never overwhelmed by them. We've stood on it, rejoiced on it, dreamed on it, cried on it.....and it's a tangible illustration of Psalm 61 verse 2;

'When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the towering rock of safety'

We have a safe place; One who knows and cares for us; no-one is outside His love.

In these restricted times, let's come –as we are– and voice our overwhelmings. Let's draw close to the One who promised never to leave us or forsake us. He really is there.

with love
Margi

PS We had another 'overwhelming' last week when Ted suffered a mild stroke and spent a night in hospital. Thankfully, he has recovered well.
And tomorrow is Easter Day!

Date: Thu, 16 Apr 2020 at 09:25
Subject: Reflection: Disturbed or Decided?

Well it's here.

I knew the virus must be in the population, but last week's post by the Axminster Medical Practice described confirmed cases and some seriously ill people in Axminster area.

I found this DISTURBED me. So far I have felt protected here – in the UK in a South West bubble, away from large populations; having our 'personal shoppers'; enjoying countryside exercise; enjoying the new rhythms; benefiting from the 'space'.....

Suddenly I felt disturbed. I talked to God about this overwhelming feeling.

Later yesterday I received an email from my friend in Bhutan. Her travel plans to UK were cancelled last minute because airlines closed. She acknowledged her disappointment at the time, but later –as we are in lockdown– saw God's hand in it, because she would not have been able to have her operation and would be in UK with nothing to do. She wrote this to me, concerning Ted's chemo being cancelled: 'All this is known to the Father and His loving plans for you are not DISTURBED.' That word again!

So DECISION time. Do I wake up each morning feeling disturbed wondering if I might get ill today? Or do I wake up with the Psalmist's words ringing in my head: 'This is the day the Lord has made, I will rejoice and be glad in it.'

I have DECIDED to be glad. To give today to my Father, who knows.

Much love and prayers that you can do the same.
Margi

Date: Mon, 27 Apr 2020 at 15:36

Subject: thoughts from Margi

Dear Friends

Here's another encouragement as we live responsibly and thankfully in these restricted days.

We are well; sometimes 'see' our family here at a safe distance and are discovering many beautiful country walks in our daily exercise time. God is calling us by name, to spend time with Him and experience His care for us.

WHICH MIRROR?

The lady artist who had owned our house left many mirrors when they sold it to us.

These mirrors are placed carefully to bring light into the rooms and consequently the house is light and airy. We left some of them in place.

However, I have discovered that it MATTERS which mirror I use; some make me look youthful and others make me look ancient!

It made me think about how we see ourselves in God's mirror?

Are we smiling, anxious, careworn, embarrassed, guilty, haggard, scared, excited, radiant?

Our daily circumstances do affect us and that shows on our faces.

But what does God see when He looks at us?

Colossians 1:20–23

'By Him (Jesus) God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of his blood on the cross. This includes you.....as a result, he has brought you into the very presence of God, and YOU ARE HOLY AND BLAMELESS AS YOU STAND BEFORE HIM WITHOUT A SINGLE FAULT.'

God sees us dressed in Jesus' righteousness; holy and blameless.

We don't always feel /see ourselves like that. And we have to come honestly to tell God when we have got it wrong, because this 'Confessing of sins' isn't a humiliation, it's a gift which leads to freedom; freedom from wrong thoughts, mindsets, actions, complacency and we get relief from the baggage.

In these Lockdown days, we need to know we are loved and accepted and that all our thoughts are given to God. The enemy is out there, to distract, deceive and discourage us. Whatever he is telling you— shout out the TRUTH!

We are standing in God's presence LOVED, WELCOMED AND CLEAN. We worship our Risen Lord Jesus.

Margi x

4th May

ROCK AND WATER

Somehow Lockdown is beginning to be much harder!

Perhaps the initial period was a bit of a 'holiday' and I enjoyed doing those jobs I have never 'had the time to do.' But now it's wearing a bit thin; days seem to merge into one another without a distinctive pattern; I'm missing the opportunity to be helpful practically and now need to receive help – for which I am very thankful. I am grateful for the quiet spaces for talking with and listening to God and to know He is talking with me.

He calls me – you– by name; He made us and he loves us and thinks about us!

Psalm 139

This morning, I read in Psalm 114:

'He turned the rock into a pool of water;
yes, a spring of water flowed from solid rock.'

This was referring to the journey through the wilderness in the Old Testament history, but I saw it in the context of the 'rock' of Lockdown; can God bring water-refreshment – from this too?

I remembered Jesus' words to the woman at the well;
'Those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life.'

God can lift the heaviness of Lockdown and give us a bubbling spring of life?

YES!!!!

I need to come and drink. 'Take a drink of the Living water- it will do you good'
(Jamie Owens lyrics)

Let's come through Lockdown with renewed energy given to us by God!

Let's share what He is saying to us, to refresh others.

12th May

WHOSE VOICE?

I've been thinking about listening to God – and trying to do that – but sometimes other 'voices/thoughts/distractions' seem to bombard those quiet moments.

How do I know which is HIS voice?

Jesus talks about himself as the shepherd (John 10) and that 'He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. They follow him because they 'know his voice.'

I'm not talking about an audible voice booming down from heaven, but a quiet inner assurance that I'm on the right path and that as I read the Bible, I am encouraged, challenged, forgiven and loved.

Of course, when the Holy Spirit does point out things that are wrong then amazingly, as I agree with Him and ask forgiveness, there's a weight removed and a lightness an ENCOURAGEMENT to more listening and joy! The 'rich*' and satisfying' life Jesus describes.

But Jesus also warns us that there's a thief. An enemy intent on stealing our joy, destroying our friendships (church, friends and family) and killing off the freedom we have – making us feel condemned. This voice is always DISCOURAGING, DECEITFUL and DESTRUCTIVE.

During Lockdown I've been aware of this wrong voice.

An incident of accidentally annoying someone got blown up in my thoughts into 'well– perhaps the friendship will be withdrawn – perhaps we won't resume such close contact' when actually it had been resolved in the moment of apology and probably not even considered again by that person.

Being told that my age is a 'risk factor' (which would normally amuse me) and in Lockdown it suddenly became an anxiety – you could have a stroke/ heart attack– what's the point? – all blown up out of proportion. When usually I am at ease, knowing that God cares through the bad times as well as the good.

But the real danger for me is listening to the voice that tells me 'You're not good enough!'

'Call this praying? WELL THAT'S NOT HOW TO DO IT.'

'Caring for other people? YOU'VE NO IDEA.'

'A Christian? YOU HAVEN'T A CLUE AFTER ALL THESE YEARS.'

A great big heap of CONDEMNATION when Jesus has set me free and hurled all the bad stuff into the sea, as far as east is from west, never to bother me again. It has GONE and He will never dredge it up.

I'm sharing this because we need to listen to HIS voice and to tell other voices to GET LOST!

We are all so precious and loved and we are light and salt in this strange pandemic world.

Be encouraged and listen and love Him and do what He says!

With love, Margi

*not necessarily materially rich – rich in the Father's love

18th May

MUNTSCH – DIGGING

Hi! I'm back to sparrows again! Now we have fledglings, with their fluffy innocence, learning how to feed. They parachute onto the low garden wall near our kitchen window and sit 'fluttering' saying a sort of 'notice me' to the parents who then kindly pop seed into their mouths.

But the interesting thing is, that when the parents have flown off, they start to eat the seed without any help!

It made me think of an encouragement to 'dig for ourselves into the Bible'; to read a sentence, paragraph or chunk and to think about it and ask the Holy Spirit to speak to us. He has come for EVERYONE and wants to lead us into all truth. But we have to make a start. I, MYSELF, have to find that space where I'm not distracted; to put down my phone; turn off Rend Collective and just 'BE' in God's presence. To discover the 'rich and satisfying life' Jesus talked about and to experience the welcome of the Father.

While I was digging into part of Psalm 118, I noticed the word AUTHORITY;

The psalmist writes; 'I destroyed them with the authority of the Lord.'

Then I opened Mark's gospel and was struck with how many times the authority of Jesus is mentioned in the opening chapters.

Firstly, Jesus was announced by the Father at His baptism;

'And a voice from heaven said; "You are my dearly loved son and you bring me great joy."

Jesus taught with authority; he had authority over evil; he had authority over nature.....and in Matthew 28:18 Jesus told his disciples; "I have been given ALL AUTHORITY in heaven and on earth. Therefore GO and make disciples of all the nations...."

I love the way that God links up scripture and underlines things to us.

Now, I have opportunity to recognise Jesus' authority. Last week we had an important trip to London to assess Ted's health and what the next step will be. Jesus has all authority.

That doesn't necessarily mean He will zap the cancer; but it does mean that we can be calm and know His peace.

So when I was exercising this week and the lyrics of the song were 'speak peace to my soul Lord Jesus – just as you spoke to the wind and the sea- Lord Jesus speak peace to me' I felt embraced by the One who has all the authority and who keeps us safe.

PATIENCE – LEARNING TO WAIT- FRUIT OF GOD'S SPIRIT

3rd June 2020

'When we notice Him (The Holy Spirit) hope awakens, vision widens and joy blossoms.

We see the hand of God working wonders around us. We remember there is so much more; that life's not just down to us.' (Joe Warton LICC)

I felt the holy spirit prompting me as I read Ps 84. Verse 5: 'What JOY for those whose strength comes from the Lord. Verse 12: 'What JOY for those who trust in you.'

It seemed to me that this whole section was wrapped up in JOY.

In the text we have people walking with Him on a pilgrimage; those walking through the Valley of Weeping – which will become a place of refreshing and clothed later with blessings; people growing stronger; reaching the destination; and singing the glory of being in the house of God. Verse 11: 'For the Lord God is our sun and shield.

He gives us grace and glory. The Lord will withhold no good thing from those who do what is right.'

(I understand that this also means those clothed in Jesus' righteousness and following Him.)

The last three weeks has been a time for patience to grow in our household! When we were at the hospital in London on May 13th they recommended a new treatment to be given in our local Exeter hospital. The Exeter Consultant, whom we have known for two and a half years, explained that because this treatment is experimental, the pharmacy will not authorise it. She would refer us back to London. More waiting! The letter was posted on May 20th. Discussions took place and eventually on Thursday May 28th, London said that they also cannot do it. It is now 11 weeks since active treatment was halted because of the virus and Ted is not well. We were puzzled and dismayed. But the thought of 'God not withholding any good thing' stayed with me.

That Thursday lunchtime we had a lovely meet up, at a safe distance in Axminster, with Alex, Lukas and Joana, Swiss friends living in Bristol. Lukas works in the hospital; he is a Paediatric Oncologist and Ted was able to talk with him. We caught up with their news and shared our disappointment and I shared my thought that God does not withhold any good thing.

Later that afternoon we all went to the beach – had a glorious time paddling in the sea – and at about 4.15 before we left, prayed together, specifically about Ted's situation. When Ted checked his phone later, he had an email from the Consultant in Exeter saying that she was arranging his treatment and we would receive a timetable this week. It was written at 4.15.

How amazing!

We are still waiting on this Wednesday afternoon, June 3rd! But somehow the JOY of having the Holy Spirit in us affects the waiting and 'wraps us up' and we are confident as we grow older and one day will wear out, all will be well. We can't manufacture this joy, just as a tree cannot tie on a fruit! It has to be produced in us, by the Spirit as we live our daily lives. By his grace He does this as we respond to Him. And not only joy and patience, but also love, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness gentleness and self-control.

May our lives be characterised by these qualities and bring praise to His name!