

The New Normal Whatever That Looks Like...

Dear Church Family

Saturday 13th June 2020, yesterday in fact, was the Queens official birthday. Her Royal Highness is the grand old age of 94yrs young. And if you saw the Trooping of the Colour on the T.V. you would have seen how well Her Majesty looks. The ceremony was indeed a very modest affair compared to recent years, due of course to social distancing. There were no crowds lining the streets. The Welsh Guards Regiment conducted the 'Presenting of the Colour' to Her Majesty from the recommended safe distance. All very British is its performance, a tradition upheld under difficult circumstances.

Recently I have seen a few YouTube clips, where ministers of various denominations, have said exactly the same thing. Coming out of lockdown we will need to get used to the 'New Normal' whatever that looks like. For us at SBC I'm not sure how or what that looks like at the moment.

PHILLIPPIANS 2:1-18

Looking at these verses lately, I wondered to myself, of all the things that happened to Paul after he gave his life to Christ, how he could be SSOOOO JOYFUL? After all, he had to get used to a 'New Normal' in his life, and we all know things were never going to be normal for him again. The book of Philippians is the JOY letter from Paul. He loves the people of Philippi... they have brought him much happiness, and he is not afraid to tell them that.

An Older Pastor friend of mine always used to say 'if the word **Therefore** is in the Bible... what's it there for?

Well in this case it is at the beginning of v12, probably to tie in the other 11 verses to what Paul is about to say.

Here Paul was probably addressing the whole Church to make sure that they rid themselves of any divisions or disagreements, arguments. Paul has presented Christ as a good example of how to live.

Mark Twain once said ‘few things are harder to put up with.....than the annoyance of a good example... “perhaps the thing most annoying about a good example.....is its inability to accomplish the same achievements in our own lives.....

So how do we then look at the Good example that we see in Christ and try to emulate Him?

Paul says work out your salvation... work out your own salvation. Take the plank out of your own eye first. The people of Philippi were already Christians, the same as us today.... so what does that mean? What does it mean to work out your salvation if we have already been forgiven???

Well in this case the verb....‘**work out**’.... means to work out to its full completion, keep on keeping on. And in this context, it has the same meaning as working in a mine, to extract all that you can from it. Or working in a field to obtain all that you can from it, to have the best harvest possible.

So, the purpose God wants for us is to be Christlike.
To be conformed to the image of His Son. Rom 8:29 ‘**For those God foreknew.....He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son....that he maybe the first born among many brothers and sisters. And those He predestined, He also called, and those He called, He also justified, and those He Justified, He also Glorified.**

The principle Paul is giving here is that God needs to work **in us.....before He can work through us...** God has a special purpose for everyone in the Bible and He has a special purpose for all of us today, and tomorrow.

We may have to get used to a ‘New Normal’ and the way we do things in and around the community and in Church. But the fact remains, we still need to work out our salvation to its full extent to become more Christlike. The one thing we can be assured of as life around us changes; God does not. He is the same Yesterday, Today and Forever Heb. 13:8 and that is the example Paul is talking about, and that is the example we must look to, to give us hope.

Stay safe, may our Lord Jesus Christ bless you all at this time.

Blessings
Mike