

Do Not Worry

Matthew 6:25-34

Dear Church Family

I hope this letter finds you all well. This last week if you had not realised has been Mental Health week. A week where we can openly recognise and accept, for many of us, that it is okay not to be okay if that is how we feel.

There have been a few programmes on the T.V. talking about issues with mental health. One such programme was Harry's Heroes a programme about the England football team from the 80's and 90's. Don't panic I'm not going to talk about the good old days of English football, because frankly those days are few and far between.

As I was watching these mature athletes, many now in their very late 40's and 50's, they were on a trip across Europe to play football against countries they played against years ago in competitions such as the Euro's and the World Cup; with the 'grand finale' being a rematch against our old rivals Germany in Germany.

Throughout the programme all the players talked about having mental health issues at some point in their career and the affect that it had on them as men, players, and within their own families. Playing as a team as much as they did, and getting to know each other, a lot of the players did not realise what their teammates were going through.

Two players stood out for me in this programme, Neil 'Razor' Ruddock and Paul Merson, both 52. These guys are great friends with each other, Ruddock played for Liverpool and Merson played for Arsenal, both good players of their day. Today both players have issues with alcohol to the point that Merson is a recovering alcoholic, and Ruddock has recently had pacemaker fitted due to being over weight because of a lavish lifestyle. For both these guys to be on the road to recovery they had to believe in something.....they had to believe in their friendship and start to talk. Talk to each other and to professionals to get the help they need. The strap line to the Mental Health campaign 'It's Good to Talk', something BT said years ago.

Jesus says **'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? (Matthew 6:25)**

We live in a world that is full of worries, even more so now. Who would have thought that we would have to wear face masks and gloves, wiping down your shopping trolley and keeping 2 metres apart from people whilst doing your shopping? If that scenario was suggested in the Queen's speech at Christmas, you would have thought Her Majesty had been on the sherry.

Yet we have a Heavenly Father that calls us not to worry, and in Matt 6:27 Jesus says **'Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to his life?'** Yes, we can argue that Jesus is God manifest in human likeness, so may have had an advantage in not worrying. But Jesus also knew what it was like to be in anguish. So much so, on the night He was betrayed in the garden of Gethsemane, as He prayed **"My Father, if it is possible may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will but as Your will"**(Matt 26:39), and as He prayed through His anguish He sweat drops of blood. So, Jesus knows what we are going through.

Our Heavenly Father knows that our mental health is so important that the Bible records 'Do Not Worry' 365 times. You may already know that, but it is always good to be reminded.

The NHS say that if we need support with our Mental Health then we need to seek medical advice. If you feel anxious through this lockdown, may I encourage you to do just that. Or you can call me, Jackie or Jenny for a chat, or anyone you feel you can talk to. Like Jesus we are here for you, but Christ will not leave us nor forsake us, He loves us too much for that.

At the end of the programme we beat Germany 0:1.

Christ has already won the battle; we just need to remember that.

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn His face towards you and give you peace.

Blessings

Mike