

Carrying on Regardless

Dear Church Family

It is with mixed feelings that I write to you today. As you may or may not know, Mrs Woodley died on Wednesday after a short illness. Many of you have known Mrs Woodley for many years, but alas Ali and I have only known her since coming to Sandy in 2018.

Every time I asked Mrs Woodley the question 'how are you doing today? She would reply, 'well you know, carrying on regardless, doesn't do to complain! Those of you that know Mrs Woodley well, did she ever complain? I am sure humanly speaking that she might have complained now and again, but I never heard her say anything bad about anything or anyone.

Author Pete Cantrell once said, '**The greatest freedom is having nothing to prove**'. In the short time I have known Mrs Woodley I could see that she had great freedom in her life and spirit, and she certainly did not have anything to prove. People like Mrs Woodley are invaluable to a church such as ours, as they bring their quiet confidence in the Lord with them wherever they go. This confidence in the Lord is not just obtained when becoming a Christian. No, it is gained over the years through highs and lows, celebrations and disasters in one's life but still maintaining a constant relationship with God.

Psalm 37:5-6 says, '**commit your way to the Lord; trust Him and He will do this. He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn, your vindication like the noonday sun**'. I personally believe that the Lord did indeed make Mrs Woodley's righteous shine like the dawn. Indeed, a lady well worth knowing.

Mrs Woodley's quiet confident in the Lord reminds me of Job. Now I am not suggesting that her life was as bad as Job's, but he also had that quiet confidence in God.

Arguably no one in the Old Testament suffered as Job did, but he never complained. Although Job was very wealthy and very godly, he went through extreme suffering. He was robbed of his livestock, his servants were killed, his house was destroyed by a violent wind killing his children, his wife disagreed with him over his willingness to praise God in the good times as well as the bad times, and three of his closest friends accused him of having secret sin that he needed to repent of. Having gone through all of this, Job's reply is, **'The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away, may the name of the Lord be praised'** (Job 1:21-22). Reading the account of Job you can see how much suffering he actually went through, but he still never complained.

Having such confidence in God, to know, no matter what we are going through, He has us in the palm of His hand. That is a confidence worth having, and Mrs Woodley, like Job had it in spades! Both a fine example of how to live for God.

Blessings

Mike