

4<sup>th</sup> August, 2020

Dear Church Family,

If you're anything like me, lockdown fatigue is setting in. If not, praise God! Either way, with the announcements yesterday and on Sunday, we've got a way to go. So I wanted to take this opportunity to say THANK YOU and offer some encouragement.

First, THANK YOU! Thank you for persevering in your relationship with Christ through this difficult time. Thank you for persevering with online church, whether as individuals or as families. Thank you for persevering with online Bible Study. Thank you for persevering in prayer. And thank you for persevering in care for one another – whether by emails, phone calls, cards, Zoom or other. I am genuinely encouraged by your perseverance. THANK YOU!

Second, some encouragement. Peter writes: *'now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.'* (1Peter 1:6-7). In other words, your above perseverance proves your faith is genuine and will be rewarded on that last day! So can I encourage you to keep persevering.

We also know this virus is part of our fallen world, which longs to be restored with us! As Paul writes in Romans 8, *'We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.'* (Rom. 8:22-25). So it's okay to lament or groan (not moan or whinge) this Stage 4 lockdown along with our creation. But remember our hope of the new creation, with new bodies! In fact, it will be so glorious that just a few verses before this Paul writes: *'I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us'* (Rom. 8:18). So can I encourage you to keep waiting patiently.

And to help us, consider Christ. As the Bible says: *'Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.'* Our opposition is may not with sinful people at the moment, but a fallen world. Nonetheless, can I encourage you to fix your eyes on Jesus that we might persevere, wait patiently, and not lose heart!

If you need help, please reach out. We are trying to touch base with everyone but may not make it to you before you need help. Even if you'd like prayer, we'd love to pray for you more specifically. Just let us know.

Finally, I found a prayer from John Ballie encouraging. (He was a Scottish Minister during the early 1900's). I offer it to you below for your encouragement.

In Christ, Andrew Price.

'Eternal Father of my soul,  
let my first thought today be of you, let my first impulse be to worship you, let my first  
word be your Name, let my first action be to kneel before you in prayer.

For your perfect wisdom and perfect goodness,  
For the love you have for all people,  
For the love you have for me,  
For the great and mysterious opportunity of my life,  
For your Spirit, who dwells in my heart,  
I praise and worship you O Lord.

Yet, when this morning prayer is finished, do not let me think that my worship is  
ended and spend the rest of the day forgetting you. Rather, from these quiet  
moments, let your light and joy and power pour out and remain with me through every  
hour of this day.

May that light and joy and power,  
Keep my thoughts pure,  
Keep me gentle and truthful in all I say,  
Keep me faithful and diligent in my work,  
Keep me humble in my opinion of myself,  
Keep me honourable and generous in my dealings with others,  
Keep me loyal to you and  
Keep me mindful of my eternal destiny as your child.

O God, you have been the refuge of your people through every generation, be my  
refuge in every moment and every need that I face today. Be my guide through all  
uncertainty and darkness. Be my guard against all that threatens my spiritual well-  
being. Be my strength in times of testing. Cheer my heart with your peace, through  
Jesus Christ my Lord, Amen.'

For more prayers: [www.thisdayipray.com](http://www.thisdayipray.com)