

Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Dear Members of our Church Family,

On Friday 2 October, Donald Trump and his wife Mrs Melania Trump the President and the First Lady of the United States tested positive for COVID-19. This news sent shock waves around the world, not least because America is only one month away from a presidential election and this period is the peak time for political Campaigns. As the world absorbed the news, we in the UK may remember that our Prime Minister Boris Johnson also fell ill due to the coronavirus in April this year.

It looks sad and serious as the leaders of the world became victims of the deadly disease, which may be seen as confirming that nobody is exempted from the pandemic. Waves of good wishes flow toward Donald Trump as many more people brace themselves to avoid the virus.

The University of Northumberland was reported to have 770 students who tested positive for COVID-19 and were ordered to self-isolate. I pray that God will continue to keep his hedge of protection around his people (Isaiah 5:5). From an interview with the UK Chancellor of the Exchequer on Radio 4 on Tuesday morning 6th October, I learned that there is a need to face the reality that for the next six months we may be dealing with the effects of COVID-19 which has already led the country into a recession. Furthermore, the issues of unemployment are being dealt with in a way that keeps those jobs which are viable and thus invites a restructuring of the employment situation, through re-training and developing new skills, instead of continuing to support employments that may not be viable. This led me to ask whether Christianity may have recognised the point that COVID-19 may be inviting us to undertake a restructuring of our beliefs?

Churches in our circuit are making successful movements towards reopening for Communion, Prayers and other forms of services. As these are periods in which strict regulations and guidelines need to be met, we continue to pray for the people who are leading these efforts on behalf of and in collaboration with other members of our churches and communities. During the coming weekend, Addlestone Methodist Church is working to be opened for prayers on Saturdays from 10.30 AM. Starting from 10th October. Our Sister Church Weybridge Methodist Church is also working on opening the church for a Communion Service on Sunday 18th October and also celebrate the Church Anniversary. Onwards and upwards we seem to be moving towards using our church premises in ways that may be reminiscent of what we had before the Coronavirus pandemic. But I acknowledge that this may be easier said than done.

The need to be smart and cautious cannot be more relevant. We are reminded that there is an existing need to address what is best for the people of God and God's world or vineyard in

general. Last week's meditation "Matthew 21:33-46", considered a landowner and this was the third narrative about a landowner. The first was dealt with two weeks ago as he hired workers for the vineyard which ended up in a quarrel "Matthew 20:1-16". Secondly, he sent his sons to go and work in the vineyard, one obeyed the other son disobeyed "Matthew 21: 23-23". This third narrative cited that the landowner leased out his land to some farmers and the tenants chose to kill his son and steal the son's inheritance? Now I invite you to reason with the landowner, seen in all three cases like God, give the landowner or God credit for trying various strategies to make his people gainfully employed, giving them appropriate authority and opportunities but yet receiving disappointments in return. Personally, I invite us to try hard not to disappoint God even if we have done so in the past.

For this week's meditation please read "Matthew 21:1-14". In the event that we treat the wedding banquet as an invitation to the kingdom of God, we may try to see whether our names would appear on the list of invited guests? Finally, although we may pray and work best to survive COVID-19, it may not be a surprise that we wish for the kingdom of God to be here on earth, as the ultimate solution that brings perfection.

Jesus prayed for God's kingdom to come in the Lord's Prayer so let us keep the hope of inhabiting elements of God's kingdom, now on earth whilst we are alive. I wish us all good health and peace in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sincere regards

Sydney Samuel