

Minister's pastoral letter for Sunday 10 January

From Deacon Gill

A very happy New Year to my Poole Bay Circuit Family may our Lord and our God ***crown the year, 2021, with His goodness {Psalm 65:11a}***.

So, on Monday evening we heard from our Prime Minister that we are going back into a stricter Lockdown. We have been praying fervently that our Lord would give our Prime Minister godly wisdom and surround him with godly counsel, so we must believe this decision to lock England down again is a godly one.

One of my *go to* accounts in Scripture when I am feeling concerned and not sure which way to turn comes from **2Chronicles 20**. King Jehoshaphat is on the throne of Judah and word comes to him that ***a great multitude is coming against him from beyond the sea {v.2}***. I don't know what you do when you hear distressing news, but I don't tend to do what King Jehoshaphat did, which was to ***seek the LORD, proclaim a nationwide fast*** and gather the people of Judah together, so that together as a nation they could seek the Lord. When I find myself in a distressing situation I don't fast, I don't call friends to pray with me, and I don't immediately go to the throne of God.

But King Jehoshaphat does all of the above and in **verse 12** at the end of his prayer, prayed in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem he prays, ***'O our God... for we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You.'*** You can replace the words, ***'great multitude'*** with whatever you are facing right now and make King Jehoshaphat's prayer your prayer.

Then, in **verses 14-17** we read God's response to the prayers and fasting of the nation of Judah, ***'do not be afraid', 'for the battle is not yours, but God's', 'you will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, Who is with you...'*** I read those words and repeat those words, make those words God's word to me in my situation and all of a sudden, the fear, and the panic are replaced with confident trust in my God and I begin to do what King Jehoshaphat did, **verse 21**, he appointed those who should sing to the LORD, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army...I ask Alexa to play Christian music and I sing!

Isaiah 61:3 says that those who have trusted Christ as their Saviour have ***a garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.'***

May the account of King Jehoshaphat encourage us to seek God, fast, pray and sing when our ***'great multitude'*** whatever it maybe comes against us.

Love in Him

Deacon Gill