

Coach House Church

BEACONS

NO BORDERS

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Have you ever sat down to pray and talk to God and considered how many other people across the world are also doing the same thing? Or maybe when you are singing and worshipping in a small group of believers, have you ever thought how many hundreds or thousands are also sending their thanks and praise towards heaven.

Sometimes it is good to remember that we are all part of one body, despite the differences and the diversity of believers over the world, our various cultures and forms of worship. It's good to remember there we have this unseen link with many other Christians across the world. We are connected through our belief as Jesus as Saviour and understand that one day we will all join together to sing praises directly to our God.

In Colossians 1: 17 and 18 it tells us that Jesus is the head of the church and that he holds everything together. Jesus is the connection between all believers. Thomas, one of Jesus' disciples, was struggling with the idea that Jesus would not be with him physically on earth and was leaving to prepare a place in heaven. And in John 14:6 Jesus said to Thomas: 6 ..."I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. Faith in Jesus is the route to God and life beyond the here and now.

I think during our national lockdown situation, it is so important to realise that we are not isolated or locked down from God. We can bring our concerns however, big or small because we have a God who cares for the details of our lives.

There are two great recounts in the New testament that involve lockdowns and the power of prayer and praise to God. They both involve followers of Jesus who were arrested and imprisoned because of their faith. In the first recount, from Acts 12, Peter is arrested by King Herod Agrippa who ran a campaign to persecute Christians. The important thing to note is in verse 5 ..the church prayed earnestly.

Acts 12 5 But while Peter was in prison, the church prayed very earnestly for him.6 The night before Peter was to be placed on trial, he was asleep, fastened with two chains between two soldiers. Others stood guard at the prison gate. 7 Suddenly, there was a bright light in the cell, and an angel of the Lord stood before Peter. The angel struck him on the side to awaken him and said, "Quick! Get up!" And the chains fell off his

wrists. 8 Then the angel told him, "Get dressed and put on your sandals." And he did. "Now put on your coat and follow me," the angel ordered. 9 So Peter left the cell, following the angel. But all the time he thought it was a vision. He didn't realize it was actually happening. 10 They passed the first and second guard posts and came to the iron gate leading to the city, and this opened for them all by itself. So they passed through and started walking down the street, and then the angel suddenly left him. 11 Peter finally came to his senses. "It's really true!" he said. "The Lord has sent his angel and saved me from Herod and from what the Jewish leaders(c) had planned to do to me!" 12 When he realized this, he went to the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many were gathered for prayer. 13 He knocked at the door in the gate, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to open it. 14 When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed that, instead of opening the door, she ran back inside and told everyone, "Peter is standing at the door!" 15 "You're out of your mind!" they said. When she insisted, they decided, "It must be his angel." 16 Meanwhile, Peter continued knocking. When they finally opened the door and saw him, they were amazed.

Although their prayers were answered, it was such a miraculous event, that neither Peter nor his friends could believe their eyes. You can picture the scene, which is quite amusing when you think he was left standing at the door while Rhoda went to tell everyone. What is also noticeable is that Peter was so fast asleep, the night before his trial, that the angel had to shake him awake. He wasn't restless or troubled. The prayers of his friends and his faith in Jesus had given him deep peace and not turmoil.

In another event in Acts 16, both Paul and Silas have been arrested for sharing their faith which has upset the Roman authorities. Their solution to being locked down was to pray and sing hymns.

Acts 16 25 Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening. 26 Suddenly, there was a massive earthquake, and the prison was shaken to its foundations. All the doors immediately flew open, and the chains of every prisoner fell off! 27 The jailer woke up to see the prison doors wide open. He assumed the prisoners had escaped, so he drew his sword to kill himself. 28 But Paul shouted to him, "Stop! Don't kill yourself! We are all here!" 29 The jailer called for lights and ran to the dungeon and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. 30 Then he brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, along with everyone in your household." 32 And they shared the word of the Lord with him and with all who lived in his household. 33 Even at that hour of the night, the jailer cared for them and washed their wounds. Then he and everyone in his household were immediately baptized. 34 He brought them into his house and set a meal before them, and he and his entire household rejoiced because they all believed in God.

This was a life changing event for both Paul and Silas, building up their faith in a time of great adversity. Even more so for the jailer and his entire household who had a life changing experience beginning to trust in Jesus as their Saviour.

It is good to know that whatever our circumstances, wherever we are in the world, we can pray. We can talk to Jesus and connect to a higher power. It is good to know that our connection to God is not restricted by who we are, where we live, our level of

education, our social status or age. Neither is God restricted by any lockdown, boundary or border.

Corrie Ten Boom spent some time in a concentration camp during the war years. She was arrested for hiding Jewish families. She says about praying:

The wonderful thing about praying is that you leave a world of not being able to do something, and enter God's realm where everything is possible. He specializes in the impossible. Nothing is too great for His almighty power. Nothing is too small for His love.

Amen



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