

Coach House Church

BEACONS

STABILITY

4 T H F E B R U A R Y 2 0 2 1

A rocky table is annoying and sometimes no matter how much trouble you go to to even out the wobble, folding up cardboard and pushing it under one of the legs, it still doesn't seem to be secure and stable, spilling your coffee at the slightest nudge.

A few months ago I suffered with a bad shoulder. I'd overstrained it carrying a heavy object and then each time I moved my arm I had a sharp pain shooting down it. It is surprising to find how unstable I became because I couldn't reach out with my right arm. I was no longer balanced and felt very unstable walking up or down stairs.

Both of these experiences show us that we like and expect stability in the objects around us and in how our bodies behave. We are thrown, maybe temporarily when the status quo changes and we want everything back to normal again, in balance and secure.

Recently on the news, there was a report of a car disappearing into a sink hole, a chasm that opened up in a normal residential street a few miles away from where we live. It was devastating for the families as this movement in the earth led to subsidence in the houses and, as cracks appeared in the front walls, the families had to evacuate with a handful of their belongings.

This led me thinking about the importance of stability in our lives and what the bible says about it. I think it helps to look at the dictionary definition which has a range of meanings fitting different contexts:

- a.** Resistance to change, deterioration, or displacement.
- b.** Constancy of character or purpose; steadfastness.
- c.** Reliability; dependability.
- d.** The ability of an [object](#), such as a ship or aircraft, to maintain equilibrium or resume its original, upright position after displacement, as by the sea or strong winds.

There are different ways of looking at this word 'stability'.

On the one hand, we are subject to the general cycle of life and how our health and our circumstances may change. So there is a sense of not expecting stability. We expect change to happen. Genesis 3 tells of the first humans unable to follow God's one rule, to not eat of the one fruit that was not allowed, and they chose to make their own decision, their own choice and not listen to God. Hence, they were no longer fit to live in the perfect environment of Eden where there was no decay, no instability at all, and where creation was 'very good' in God's own words. Deterioration in the relationship between man and his creator began right there. Their minds were swayed by enticing words and the beautiful relationship between man and God was broken.

On the other hand, stability means not changing. It refers to having a constancy of character, of being known for reliability and dependability, of maintaining a steadfast attitude and is something which is both positive and something that we can work towards. The New Testament letters to the early church mention the importance of stability- in character, in attitude, in opinion and faith. This reminds us that the struggles of humans over the centuries, from the early church right the way up to today, is still the same; of not being hoodwinked by new trends or swayed by clever speeches, caught up in dodgy deals or conned by fake news.

In Ephesians 4, Paul is talking to believers in the early church. Stability in the church happens when believers put their trust in God, aim to be more like Jesus in attitude and action, and rely on His Holy Spirit to be their guide and support. By doing this the body of believers is equipped to support and build up each other, being stronger as a family together.

Ephesians 4¹³ This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

¹⁴ Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. ¹⁵ Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. ¹⁶ He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

An important aspect of stability is in maintaining equilibrium. The same as we would expect a plane in flight not to drop and rise but to maintain its course, to be consistent. In life, our aim is to follow the example of Jesus and his attitude and love towards others while maintaining standards of the highest level in our behaviour and moral choices. At the same time, it is acknowledging that no one can reach perfection and the standard that God demands of us, in our own strength. It is recognising that you can't do everything on your own, that you need that support to not wobble over at the slightest nudge, to fall at the first hurdle.

Although I think bears have a good idea of hibernating to avoid the bad weather where survival is the most difficult, hiding away until the trouble has passed then waking up to warmer days, this is not an option in everyday life. If you read the well know story where the wise man built his house upon the rock, and the foolish man built his house on the sand, you will see that the storms arrived at both houses.

Matthew 7 ²⁴ "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶ But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

The wise man was not exempt from life's troubles. He did not avoid the difficulties around him. The huge difference was that the foundation was secure. Jesus was telling the crowd listening to him to listen to and then act on his words to ensure they could build their lives on a stable base, on reliable and trustworthy words.

Corrie Ten Boom said: Jesus did not promise to change the circumstances around us. He promised great peace and pure joy to those who would learn to believe that God actually controls all things.

When circumstances around us create uncertainty and instability it is good to look beyond our current situation, to pray and ask for God's help, to ask the Holy Spirit to guide and direct our decisions, to comfort us when we are struggling. Throughout the bible God promised to send a Saviour to show us the way to live, to give us an example to follow. Jesus' purpose throughout was to show unbiased love to everyone and to be the perfect sacrifice for our failings and imperfections so that we could be reconnected with a Holy God.

Finally, the relationship that was broken in the garden of Eden could be re established and secure for eternity.

So don't struggle along, propping up the wobbly table legs ask the Creator to do it for you and with you.



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