

Coach House Church

BEACONS

SPACE

16TH JUNE 2021

Recently we had a clear out and tidy up at home. It was the first chance we had had since our house had been full of people throughout the last year, as different friends and family stayed over, as they left uni, started jobs in Manchester or were just between jobs. It was great having a full house over the lockdowns as we always had lots of people to chat to and share meals with. But things change don't they, as new plans emerge and people move onto the next chapter in their lives. So there we were ready to have a Spring clean and clear up- and two empty rooms ready for further visitors.

How can so much stuff accumulate in one house? I actually feel like I've been clearing and moving things out since we first moved in 18 years ago. Where does it all come from? So, many items of clothing, spare bedding, books and other allsorts were dispatched to Ann's Charity Shop, Rev 320. Other items went straight into the bin.

Although it is hard work, and it should never be underestimated just how much energy it takes to move stuff out - what you find is that a good clean, clear and tidy is rather cathartic. The physical act of clearing the excess belongings actually is beneficial to your mind as well. The result is that it also creates a more relaxing space which gives you space to breathe.

You may have a beautiful, tidy and organised house but you may find your head and your mind is full of thoughts that go round and round, of anxieties about life in general, of unfinished business or of concerns to do with daily living. The bible warns that this is not a good position to be in. When Jesus spoke to groups of people, he recognised the struggles they were having and it says in Matthew 11:28

28 Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."

He doesn't say come to me because all your difficulties will disappear. He still talks about the yoke and the burden but, he does talk about sharing the load so that it becomes much easier. We often say a problem shared is a problem halved. It's the same principle but sharing a concern with Jesus, talking and praying for his help, means that you will be able to find rest and peace while you trust in a Holy God to be close to you in the problem.

The apostle Paul learned how to rely on God to the extent that he could say in Philippians 4:11-13

...for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. 12 I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. 13 For I can do everything through Christ,[d] who gives me strength.

He didn't have to fill his mind with worries and concerns because he had learned to give the problem to God and trust him to strengthen and protect Paul through a whole range of circumstances including shipwreck, beatings and imprisonment for his faith.

Trust in God provides space to think, to consider, rest and relax. It allows us to rest emotionally and spiritually. Many times we are not even aware of how full our lives are, of how busy and concerned we have become as we try to fit so much in, having so many responsibilities and our time is stretched to ridiculous limits. Matthew 6:6 says 6 But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

This means we are not distracted and can give our attention to the matter in hand- to talking to God. Jesus, himself went off alone into the desert to pray because he knew it was essential to have time to concentrate. So, it must be important to give our minds space and quiet and a chance to declutter from the business of life. Have you ever noticed how your body relaxes once you get out of the city; seeing an open green field, a woodland, a river. It is though God's creation is brought back into focus and the man made features are pushed to the background. This

may be as you walk through the park or sit in the garden and look up to the sky. You become aware of the space around you and remember that God created all of this.

Psalm 103 talks of the space we can see and how it reminds us of our God.

11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, So great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. 12 As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.

This helps to put things into perspective. In contrast to our busy lives that are full of the tiniest details we can stop and think about the bigger picture. God's love for us is vast, as enormous as the expanse of the sky. God's forgiveness is absolute and our sins are removed to the furthest limits of the universe. Read the rest of Psalm 103 yourself. It is so encouraging.

In verse 2 it reminds us to: Let all that I am praise the Lord; may I never forget the good things he does for me.

For me, this is a good reminder when my mind needs space. It helps change my perspective from concerns about day to day plans to focussing back on God who is in control of the ultimate plan of life. Listing the good things that God provides takes my mind away from those things that crowd in that are not essential.

It is also more than listing the good things of life. It is about recognising that God, our creator, is also our helper and support. God wants us to come to him and ask for help and guidance. As with the earlier request from Jesus who promises to be with us to share our concerns and troubles. It is about looking back and remembering that God has been with us before and will continue to be with us, and we just need to ask. In Samuel there is reference to the Ebenezer stone. This was a huge stone placed as a reminder, as a memorial not to a person but to God's provision.

1 Samuel 7 says 12 Samuel then took a large stone and placed it between the towns of Mizpah and Jeshanah.[a] He named it Ebenezer (which means "the stone of help"), for he said, "Up to this point the Lord has helped us!"

We need space for a healthy mind and spirit. This may be getting rid of distractions so we can focus, getting away from noise. It may be just 5 minutes sitting alone, walking through the park, pottering in the garden. Even Jesus rested and took time to gather his thoughts so he could talk directly to his father. To help us change our perspective from a hectic life full of decisions and concerns to one

of trusting and relaxing in God's love for us, it is important to consider how vast is our God who will never run out of time or energy for us, who can deal with all our difficulties if we ask. It is also a good idea to look and see how God has already provided for us. We can free our minds of unnecessary concerns and put our trust in God who will continue to guide and support us.

Psalm 103

Let all that I am praise the Lord;

with my whole heart, I will praise his holy name.

2 Let all that I am praise the Lord;

may I never forget the good things he does for me.



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