

# Coach House Church BEACONS

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## STILL WATERS

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7TH JULY 2020

There is nothing better than sitting on a kayak on a beautiful flat sea with the sun shining down. The sea is crystal clear and the kayak glides through the still water. It's so easy to look down through the deep water: following the lines from the marker buoys down to the lobster pot on the sea bed, watching the crabs scuttle across the sand, seeing all the colours of the seaweed swaying below. There are not many times in a Summer when this actually happens, when the conditions are this perfect, but they are memorable occasions.

Obviously this is based on memories of a normal year when I could be out on the water in sunny Anglesey – maybe soon! But the point is that I find still water is peaceful, calm and relaxing.

***Psalm 23 says:***

***1 The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, 3 he refreshes my soul.***

There are various translations of the original word: quiet waters, still waters, restful waters, and all of these describe something peaceful and something which is necessary in our busy world. The Psalms were written as songs or praises to God, often seen as poetry with images or metaphors to help us understand an invisible God. So, the image of walking by, or in my case paddling on, still waters helps us to see God as peace and calm, of God who refreshes and brings rest.

The thing is that we need rest because life is in turmoil. We may feel that still waters are nowhere to be seen and we are surrounded more by turbulent waters. The disciples in the boat crossing the Sea of Galilee experienced this when a great storm suddenly blew up. They naturally panicked and especially so, as Jesus was fast asleep in the boat. They mistakenly supposed was because he didn't care

about the calamity that was about to happen. They had forgotten that the creator had power and authority over creation. In Mark 4:39 Jesus said 'Quiet, be still!' and storm instantly stopped.

Two hundred years ago, a Chicago lawyer, Horatio Spafford, wrote the famous hymn: It is well with my soul.

***The hymn says:***

***When peace like a river, attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll  
Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say  
It is well, it is well, with my soul***

This hymn was written after great tragedy had taken away Horatio's thriving business and comfortable lifestyle and much more than this, he had lost all 5 of his children, following a ship wreck that only his wife survived. As a devout Christian, he was able to pen these words, reflecting the deep peace and comfort that he found through the Holy Spirit, the Comforter.

***The hymn goes on to say:***

***My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought  
My sin, not in part but the whole,  
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, o my soul***

Amazing words, reflecting an unshakeable trust in Almighty God.

In the New testament, in Matthew 11:28 Jesus is talking to and teaching groups of people.

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

We all need rest, and not just physical rest. We need rest for our mind and our spirit. This is an area of well-being that is currently at the fore, recognised as an essential element of our whole health and wellness. We don't function well for any amount of time when we are weary in body and mind. Sometimes we need some space and relaxation, to refocus and reflect on what is important. Sometimes we need a deep inner healing because of trauma, past hurt or tragedy.

*Isaiah 40 reminds us:*

*The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth. He never grows weak or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding. 29He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless. 30Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fall in exhaustion. 31But those who trust in the LORD will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.*

We find the rest when we reflect on God, our creator, when we trust in Him to provide what we need in life, when we acknowledge that he has our best interests at heart. So much so that he sent Jesus to be our perfect sacrifice, so that one day we could spend eternity in that place of perfect rest.

Another place I love to visit is the Lake District. When we walk around Buttermere or Grasmere on a clear, crisp day, the water is so flat it is like a mirror. Still waters show the reflections of the surrounding environment. The colours of the fells, the trees and the sky are clearly reflected so vividly that it is sometimes difficult to tell which is real and which is reflected.

The water reflects the nearby creation and in turn, reflects the Creator who made all this possible. We glimpse the invisible God through his creation- majestic and beautiful, powerful and yet gentle, full of pattern, structure and purpose.

*Colossians 1 talks about Jesus as a reflection of God, the father:*

*15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by[f] him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.*

Jesus is the reflection of God the father who is so awesome and holy that we have no chance of being near. Colossians 1:19 describes Jesus as embodying 'All the fullness of God' and in Philippians 2:6 it explains that Jesus did not make use of the advantages that were available to him. He put the ace card to one side, that would have given him an instant win and accepted that going to the cross was the route

to take. Only through the perfect sacrifice would ordinary humans ever be able to access a holy God. Jesus knew this was the only way to re-establish the relationship between the creation and the creator. Only Jesus could make peace between humans and God and the perfect, sinless, blood sacrifice was the only acceptable way to achieve this.

Let's read Psalm 23 to finish.

*1 The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, 3 he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. 4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. 6 Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever. Amen.*



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