

Revd Josephine Soon

2 March 2021

A letter to Birch Coppice Methodist Church in lockdown

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Dear friends and family in Christ,

There were two storms (Jesus walking on the water) recorded in Mark's gospel (chapter 4 and chapter 6). I was revisiting these passages and was wondering which storm that we find ourselves in at the moment?

Like a mighty storm, COVID-19 has left the world reeling and rocking with the very foundations of 'normal' shaken. We have learned that pandemics are no respecter of persons—the royal or lowly, rich or poor, the aged or babes. We have been equalized—white, black, coloured, Asian, European, and African, that we all are equal before our Creator God. We all cry with the same tears, our hearts are broken in the same way, and our worries and fears are as profound as those near and far.

Praise God with recent announcements from the government which has given us grounds for optimism that restrictions will be eased in all parts of the UK by early summer, but there remains tests to be met and a degree of provisionality about each stage.

We must continue to thank God for our health workers who are holding the hands of their dying patients as they are far away from family and friends. We continue to ask God to give strength and grace for the parents who are struggling to balance work and home-schooling or in supporting their children to re-settle back into school, while under the stress and fear of losing their jobs. We should continue to find new ways to reach out to many within our community that are feeling the anxiety of the isolation of the lockdown/quarantine or even post-lockdown.

Our church council has stepped out with faith to use our church as a community prayer centre, trusting that being disciples of Jesus, we enforce that we must not limit ourselves to be socially supportive networks to our community. As the only network who can offer the perfect peace and love to our friends, family and community, we must not shy away from proclaiming this Christian hope, especially to those who come to us from our own community as well as those who are in our own household.

**As Christians, we are the bride to God, we love the Bible as a bride loves her husband's letters. The Bible gives us God's own revelation of his identity, character, purpose and actions. It is the primary witness to the Lord Jesus Christ. In reading it, we encounter God, our 'lover' and 'husband' and Master through his Spirit with great joy. Our love for the Bible should be an expression of our love for God.** At the beginning of the year 2021, I encouraged you to read the Bible in a year. I pray that you are persevering in your daily reading as a bride reading her husband's letters.

**As a church, the bride to Lord Jesus Christ, it is natural that we should be excited to introduce Jesus to our family and friends. As a bride who introduces her husband to her family and friends, we should and need to help our family and friends to have a relationship with Jesus.** I would like you to pray for one another in this matter. Please pray for me, too. Ask God to give me the right words so I can boldly explain God's mysterious plan that the Good News is for you and your family.

With love and prayers,

*Revd Josephine Soon*