



## Bulletin 18

Dear Church!

I wonder what your favourite Bible verse is? Having said that, I'm not sure it's possible to have one favourite Bible verse! There are so many blessings expressed in Scripture – who would ever want to choose between them when they can all be ours in Jesus Christ! But from time to time there do seem to be different Bible verses which grip us or feel particularly pertinent to our circumstances. For me, right now, it has to be Hebrews 6:19-20

*We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf.*



What more could we ask for than hope and security? Hope that is based upon the certainty of Jesus' promises. Perhaps most notably,

*“... surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*  
*(Matthew 28:20)*

and

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, reserved in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power for the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.... 1 Peter 1:3-5*

That just about covers it for me – whether on earth or in heaven, our Lord has covered every eventuality! I think that sentiment was what enabled Paul to write,

*For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*  
*Philippians 1:21*

For me so far, Hebrews 6:19 is the message engraved in my mind by our present circumstances. I want that hope to shape every aspiration in my life more and more as the days go by. Again, Paul in Philippians 3:10-12, writes:

*“... I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to Him in His death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me....*

That's what our lives remain about on this earth, whatever our circumstances. That's just one of the ways in which the Lord has been speaking to me through these times. And wow, have our regular times together online, day by day, cultivated and nurtured such aspirations!

Again, I would like to ask the question, 'How has the Lord been dealing with and developing you during these past few months?' It was the philosopher, essayist, poet, and novelist, George Santayana, who once said, "'Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.'" He is more famously (but erroneously) attributed to saying, '**Those who do not learn history are doomed to repeat it.**' Learning from our past is essential to faithful living. Indeed, it's what reading Scripture is all about.

*'How has the Lord been dealing with and developing you during these past few months?'*

Paul wrote as much to the Corinthian church,

*Now these things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfilment of the ages has come. So, the one who thinks he is standing firm should be careful not to fall....*

*1 Corinthians 10:11-12*

So again, may I remind you of the online Zoom Room opportunity on Tuesday the 8<sup>th</sup> of September at 7.30pm, to have a conversation as a parish?

[Click Here](#) if you're reading this electronically or if you need to type it in, run up Zoom on your phone or computer, enter [Meeting ID: 869 8420 1693](#) & Usual Emmanuel [Passcode](#).

We'll be looking back on the past few months at some of the paths we have trodden and lessons we might do well to consolidate upon if these times are to hone and refine our lives. There will, of course, be no intrusion into private thoughts and circumstances, just an opportunity for people to share what they might like to and to commit what emerges in prayer together.

The questions we'll be using to think in advance about what might launch our conversations are:

1. ***What have you found yourself doing now, that you didn't do before lockdown?***
  - a. Are there things which have benefitted your faith and lifestyle?
    - i. How might you ensure they continue to enrich or grow your faith?
  - b. Are there things you've stopped doing?
    - i. Do you need to recover them or are you better off without them?
2. ***Have these past six months taught you anything which you want to hold onto or cultivate?***
  - a. How will you endeavour to make sure these aspirations are reached?
3. ***What lessons do you think we have learned as a church community?***
  - a. How might the past six months change what we do in future?
4. ***Has the secular world learned anything though all this?***

If you don't use Zoom, it would be great to receive a written letter or email from you so your thoughts could be part of the conversation. Mail to Rev Karl Freeman, Emmanuel Church, 1 Compton Ave, Mannamead, Plymouth, PL3 5BZ or email: [karldesk@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:karldesk@blueyonder.co.uk)

Finally, from this weekend, I am on two weeks leave. We are essentially 'holidaying at home', with a few intrepid expeditions and possible some probably ineffectual efforts to fight back in the garden! I shall be with you again at prayers on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September! Tony is now back from leave and Revs Darryl and Bev are variously coming and going as and when domesticity and work allow!

May you continue to know Christ's blessing upon you.  
In His Grip and Grace! Rev Karl