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The Smaller Beatitudes

Blessed are those who can laugh at themselves:

They will have no end of fun.

Blessed are those who can tell a mountain from a molehill:

They will be saved from a lot of bother.

Blessed are those who know how to relax without looking for excuses:

They are on the way to becoming wise.

Blessed are those who know when to be quiet and listen:

They will learn a lot of new things.

Blessed are those who are sane enough not to take themselves seriously:

They will be valued by those about them.

Happy are you if you can stake small things seriously and face serious things

calmly: You will go far in life.

Happy are you if you can appreciate a smile and forget a frown:

You will walk on the sunny side of the street.

Happy are you if you can be kind in understanding the attitudes of others,

Even when the signs are unfavourable:

You may be taken for a fool but this is the price of charity.

Blessed are those who think before acting and pray before thinking:

They will avoid many blunders.

Happy are you if you know how to hold your tongue and smile,, even when people

interrupt and contradict you or tread on your toes;

The Gospel has begun to seep into your heart. ABOVE ALL

Blessed are you who recognise the Lord in all whom you meet:

The light of truth shines in your life for you have found true wisdom.



Wollongong Congregational Church

23rd August 2020

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus.

We now continue to meet for our Church Service at 10am each Sunday.

Please remember to wear a mask. Keep 1.5 metre distance from others and avoiding hugging, kissing and hand-shakes and help with after service disinfecting.

All welcome but please do not attend services if

- ♦ you have any cold or flu symptoms,
- ♦ have travelled to hotspots
- ♦ you have been in contact with anyone known to have Covid-19

Please continue to join our activities:

- ☼ **Listen to Con's recorded video devotion each Sunday from our website** www.wollongongconchurch.org
- ☼ **Tune into Con's radio program on Pulse 94.1 FM Sunday Worship 7-10am.** Repeated Tues night 10pm. Morning devotions 6-7am daily.
- ☼ **Church Prayer Chain** Ring or text Leonie
- ☼ **Tuesday Bible Study at 10am at Con and Leonie's home at Figtree**

URGENT! Annette is resigning from her church duties from 30th August

We need people to fill the Secretary position to ensure a supported process. Training can be provided. Open to anyone who feels led to serve our church and our Lord. Can you help with any of these?

- **Writing letters** as requested by Con, the Elders or the church meeting
- **Taking and writing up minutes** of Church Meetings
- **Keeping lists** – Church members, Members and Adherents, Church email list

This week I was captivated by Psalm 46 that we are all familiar with. I could not get away from the beauty and truth of this song of praise, a prayer of affirmation and a challenge to one's own faith.

Just for a moment imagine you find a book, a curious book, it is filled with prayers and songs of worship. Imagine you know very little about faith, or the nation of Israel, nothing about the Gospel or the Cross of Christ. As you turn the pages you are awe struck by the words of the Psalm.

What is the writer talking about, of whom does he speak? Try to investigate the mind of the writer as you read

1 God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

Was he or his people in trouble? Were they in need of help and strength?

Were they looking for a safe-haven? Or is the author stating an encouraging fact? Maybe all the above you think to yourself. What is he saying?

This God is a place of refuge, a sanctuary, a safe haven, a shelter, a retreat. One in whom you can trust. There is something about the way that the writer speaks, it is as if he is sharing his personal experience- this is more than theory- this is an ongoing relationship- this God is ever present, every faithful, ever true! You long in your heart of hearts to know more about this God. Can you catch a glimpse of what the author is saying? How many of us can relate to the next verses?

2 Therefore we will not fear, Fear is universal; difficult times happen to all of us.

I read that there have been very few periods of time when there wasn't strife on this earth, such as wars, rumours of wars, diseases great difficulties. We kid ourselves if we believe that there will be utopia on this earth. The fantasy of Star Trek, where all humans live together in harmony and a central body provides all their needs, as they go forth solving the problems of the galaxy! This side of eternity it isn't going to happen! The writer has a profound understanding and source of strength and assurance, although the storms of life are everywhere, the writer is confident of one thing. He does not have to be fearful!

By now I hope that your curiosity is peaked- you want some of the writer's bravado, his strength and assurance. The author's words are steeped in history along with figurative speech; and a fact that many do not understand or know.

The river speaks of life and sustenance- yet the river is not the source of its strength and sustenance. Is there an army at her gates and will she fall? No! Says the writer, she has a secret- a secret in plain sight! God is in the midst of her and He will protect and strengthen. AND THERE IT IS! Irrespective of what happens around the city there is a protective cover- God the highest, the almighty will always protect His people!

And you hear yourself say, ***"I WANT SOME OF THAT!"*** and why not?

It is as if the writer looks into your face and says: ***8 Come and see what the LORD has done, the desolations he has brought on the earth. 9 He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire.*** And you say with some accuracy- this is not my experience of life- there is so much fear, and trauma, so much insecurity. And the Psalmist says with reassurance and confidence-***this does not have to be- this assurance that I have can be yours!***

How? you might ask, the writer gives us the answer. ***10 He says, "Be still, and know that I am God."***

What is it to be still? To chill out, to stop; To reflect; to capitulate; to surrender; to stop fighting.

Hear what the famous preacher G. Campbell Morgan said about this Psalm:

"Comment on this great song of confidence seems almost unnecessary so powerfully has it taken hold on the heart of humanity, and so perfectly does it set forth the experience of trusting souls in all ages and tumultuous times."

Martin Luther when going through a difficult time was known to have said: ***"Let us sing the forty-sixth Psalm in concert; and then let the devil do his worst."*** (John Trapp)

Con

Prayer Points

Please pray for:

- ◇ Our church family
- ◇ Those In Care: Joan Weber & Dawn Coleshill-recovering from a fall
- ◇ Janice and her son Steve—Janice is still experiencing pain
- ◇ Gail and Ray returned home safely.
- ◇ Jenny and Dave Rowe in USA working for Wycliffe Bible Translators
- ◇ Adam and the Togo Group
- ◇ FCC Churches: *Emmanuel Church Mullumbimby*
- ◇ Church family members: *Ralph and Janece Dunn*
- ◇ God's leading and authority over decisions concerning our church
- ◇ God's leading concerning need for new Elders, Deacons, Assistant Pastor
- ◇ Romani Evangelical Congregational Church in Macedonia and their Pastor
- ◇ Pulse 94.1 FM and the effectiveness of Con's radio program
- ◇ Wisdom and opportunity to reach our community with the Gospel
- ◇ Persecuted Christians in *Eritrea*
- ◇ Joyce Souter's son John, who is fighting cancer
- ◇ Bernice for healing of leg ulcers
- ◇ Conviction of how we can best support & show love to others around us
- ◇ Completion of outstanding repairs to Con and Leonie's new home
- ◇ Dennis and Karen Bagnall and the letter box distribution of "Living Water" (Gospels of John) throughout the Illawarra. Thank you Ross and Jeff for helping with distribution.
- ◇ SRE and school ministry workers; for wisdom, strength and grace and for health protection as they serve their schools
- ◇ Max and Irma recovering from surgery
- ◇ Nabila and her family who have relatives in Lebanon who may be affected by the traumatic explosion and unfolding situation
- ◇ Don is improving, praise the Lord! – limited visitors allowed
- ◇ Lynda for recovery from a fall