



Happy New Year

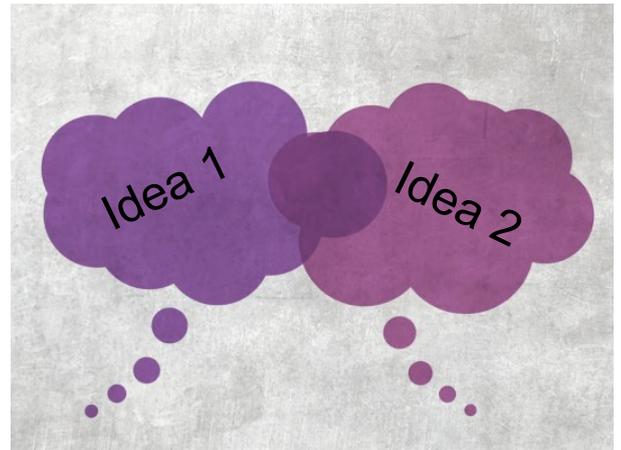
Sunday 3rd January 2021

The Callaghan Family

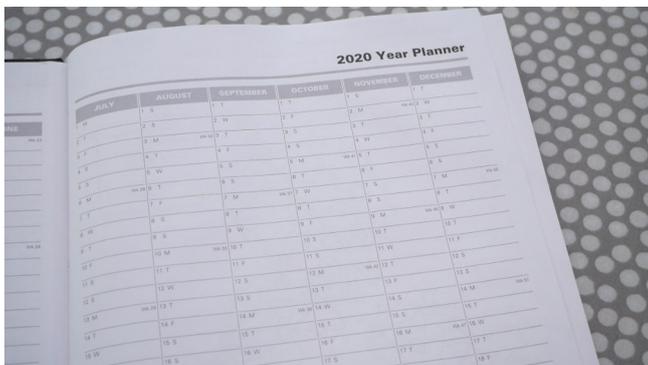
Welcome to our Service today, we hope that you are all well and that you have had a good Christmas and are looking forward to all 2021 has to offer we pray God's Holy Spirit will speak to you as we worship Him together.

Today's service is a collection of thoughts that I (Mark) has had during the last few weeks and months. They are not necessarily linked to each other—but you may discover one as you meditate on them.

The first song was Cornerstone by Hillsong. It starts with the words 'my hope is built on nothing less' ... a great song to start 2021 with – putting all our hope in God



2020 has been such an unusual and bazaar year and yet it started out so well with loads of things to look forward to. Many people start the New Year by opening up their new diary (possibly and Christmas present) and putting in it all those important dates – birthdays,



anniversaries – next comes holidays, short stay and long stay they all go in.

But 2020 had some other special events too as it marked 75 years since the end of the second world war and 80 years since the battle of Britain.

Those that like sport had the Olympic games in Tokyo to look forward to, as well as other great sporting events. Some people had special birthdays.

Other events like the end of A levels and GCSE's for some people, and a step forward into the next phase of life.

Not forgetting those that made the move from year 6 to year 7 – big step up or the move from KS1 to KS2.



Most of the things mentioned are accompanied with some form of celebration.

But on the evening of Monday 23rd March an announcement from no 10 stopped all of it.



Lockdown.

On that day, a day that will go down in history everything that was normal stopped.

We all had to follow new guidelines and rules and be careful where we went and what we did.

New signs appeared and strange markings on the floor. Which might in previous years have been called graffiti.



COVID-19
Stay 2 m
apart

NEW ROAD
LAYOUT
FOR SOCIAL
DISTANCING

COVID-19
Keep
your
distance

COVID-19
Stay 2 m
apart


There was great fear and no-one really knew what was going to happen next.

It was like being in a war except the enemy was invisible and being as such we felt powerless to attack it.

Fear crept in the door and levels of stress grew and as the days turned to weeks and the weeks to months depression set in for some people.

A song from childhood came to mind...

I Do Not Know What Lies Ahead,
The Way I Cannot See;
Yet One Stands Near To Be My
Guide,
He'll Show The Way To Me:

I Know Who Holds The Future,
And He'll Guide Me With His Hand;
With God Things Don't Just Happen,
Everything By Him Is Planned.

So As I Face Tomorrow,
With Its Problems Large And Small,
I'll Trust The God Of Miracles,
Give To Him My All.

**This is very unusual
for Mark as he is not
very musically inclined**

2020

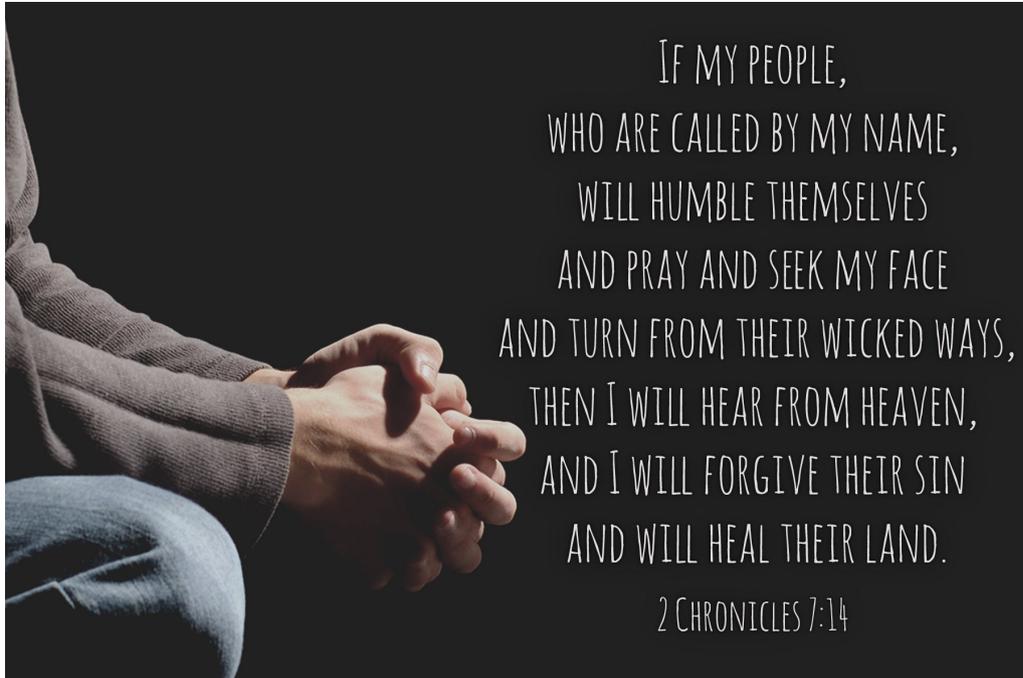
No-one is ever going to say 2020 was an easy year and that they enjoyed it – some aspects of it yes but not all of it.

But during the year I have felt that things have been happening, things that are also unseen and invisible - no it is not another nasty virus but a working of God's Spirit as churches and Christians across the country and indeed the world have become Stephen Spielberg's (he's the guy that made Star Wars and other great movies) and started to film, video, record, edit, produce and publish church services, testimonies, uplifting songs and words of encouragement.



As lockdown started I wanted to shoot a video using the words from 2 Chronicles 7:14

I would like to give a little background insight to the passage first. Solomon had just completed the building work on the first Temple in Jerusalem and was in the process of dedicating it to God. In the verses before God speaks with Solomon during the night and He affirms what Solomon had done was good. God then talks about when bad times will fall upon the people and verse 14 says



It is sad that only in times of extreme trouble do some people turn to God for help, most people these days blame Him for things that go wrong say things like “why does God allow... to happen and this to happen”

My answer would be ask Him.

As Solomon finished dedicating the Temple of God in Jerusalem which we know today as either the first temple or Solomons Temple, which King Nebuchadnezzar burnt down, we then have the rebuilt Temple in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah which came after the exile and then the Temple in the time of Jesus which we know as Herod's Temple which was eventually destroyed in 70AD by the Romans.

The Temple as with the Tabernacle of Moses' day was the resting/dwelling place for God here on earth. And each one was dedicated to God and God came in with mighty power to rest there. On the day of Pentecost that same Spirit – the Holy Spirit fell upon people and so God's Spirit is no longer in a place but in His people.

Paul in his letters talks of our bodies being the Temple of the Holy Spirit.

**So as the temple was dedicated, turned over to God if you like let us today
the first Sunday of 2021 dedicate ourselves a fresh to Him.**

Dear Heavenly Father

**We thank You for giving us this New Year
We want to start it by re-dedicating ourselves to You**

**Forgive us Lord for our wrongdoings,
Help us to grow knowing that You are our
sustenance and nobody else.**

**We prayer Lord that we may be solely and wholly
committed**

to our walk with You all the days of our lives.

**We pray that are reliance in You may grow deeper
today and**

**that our assurance in You may grow wider,
we pray that our faith in You may grow stronger and
our zeal for You may go bigger.**

**We pray that we may continually rely on Your
wisdom and**

We will no longer lean on our understanding.

Help us Lord to make you first in all we do,

Open our eyes and hearts to those we meet,

Help us to see their need and to show Your love and

**To use Your gifts that are invested in us to bring
them hope and life.**

Lord we ask these things in Your precious name

Amen

In gathering my thoughts for today the words of a song came to mind which for me is very unusual as has already been said songs don't very often do that given that I am not musically inclined.

Lord for the years....

Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided,
urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,
sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided,
Lord of the years, we bring our thanks today.

Lord, for that word, the word of life which fires us,
speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze,
teaches and trains, rebukes us and inspires us,
Lord of the word, receive your people's praise.

Lord, for our land, in this our generation,
spirits oppressed by pleasure, wealth and care;
for young and old, for commonwealth and nation,
Lord of our land, be pleased to hear our prayer.

Lord, for our world; when we disown and doubt him,
loveless in strength, and comfortless in pain;
hungry and helpless, lost indeed without him,
Lord of the world, we pray that Christ may reign.

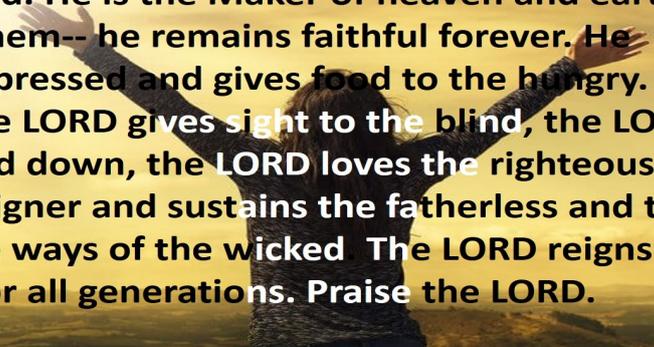
Lord, for ourselves; in living power remake us,
self on the cross and Christ upon the throne;
past put behind us, for the future take us,
Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone.

**Some members of
our Church Family
read the words of
this lovely hymn.**

**The last verse of that
says 'past put behind
us for the future take
us'.**

This is our future 2021, 2020 is our past and that is put behind us what has been has been. In years to come the events of 2020 will be the subject of GCSE History exam questions – what was England like pre Lockdown? Explain what Tier 3 meant for England in November 2020. But as we turn the page into 2021 we do so with a fresh Hope.

Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD, my soul. I will praise the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save. When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing. Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD their God. He is the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them-- he remains faithful forever. He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets prisoners free, the LORD gives sight to the blind, the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down, the LORD loves the righteous. The LORD watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked. The LORD reigns forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the LORD.
(Psalms 146:1-10)



Over Christmas our Peace was broken – I don't mean we all fell out with each other but our word PEACE.



So peace changed to PACE.



Which got me thinking sometimes in life we run around and our pace of life robs us of our peace in life. Our PEACE was easily fixed and so peace has been restored.

In the song 'May the God of Hope'.
The words are taken from
Romans 15:13



I had another thought while out and about. The Hoard has on top of it a monument which looks like a lighthouse - but it has no light in it.

I was reminded of the words from Jesus when He referred to Himself as the 'Light of the world' in John 8:12 and also in Matthew 5:14-16 Jesus says that no-one lights a lamp and hides it is put on a stand for all to see.



He then goes on to say that we should shine our lights before people.

So just a quick recap:-

- Trusting the God of miracles and giving Him our all
- Re-dedicating ourselves to God a fresh at the start of this new year
- Looking to the God of Hope who fills us with joy and peace
- Ensuring our peace isn't broken by the pace of our life
- Shining out our light into the dark places of our community
- And being people of God, people called by His name humbling ourselves before Him and seeking His face and pray that He will come and heal our land.

We ended our service with prayers, praying for our country, our NHS, our

Dear Lord

You created and you sustain our world. Nothing is out of your control. We bring before you those who face pressure and persecution because they belong to you. Please fill them with hope and courage in this coming year. Be their defender and deliverer and bring them to a place of freedom where they can worship you in peace.

In Jesus' name

Amen

Dear Lord

We thank you for your majesty - for the awesome world that you created for us to live in. Lord help us to trust you in all that we do. Fill us with your joy and peace in this new year, 2021. Help us to humble ourselves before you, to seek your face Lord.

We pray for our nation. We pray for the government and leaders - give them wisdom.

Lord we think of people that don't have what we have. For the homeless. for the persecuted. for the broken hearted. Lord we pray that you would meet them in their need.

We thank you Lord for the provision of the NHS and we pray for the doctors, the nurses and all those that work in the Medical Profession. Keep them safe as they care for others. Lord we pray for our children and their education. We pray for head teachers and their staff that are having to make difficult decisions. Please Lord give them wisdom.

Lord as we start this new year fill us afresh so that we may shine out your love to others.

We ask these things in your precious name.

Amen

To finish we sang Shine Jesus Shine finishing with The Grace.

The Grace ...

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
And the love of God,
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
Be with us all,
Now and forever more.

Amen



We have one birthday this week

